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ABSTRACT

These eight papers address the five goals of the national standards for foreign language learning: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. They include the following: (1) "From Rhetoric to Reality: Applying AATSP Standards to the Spanish Classroom" (Maria J. Amores and Frank W. Medley, Jr.); (2) "Standards for Teaching Cultures: The National Standards and the AATF Framework" (Jayne Abrate); (3) "New Directions in the Study of French: Toward a Francophone Revolution, Language Choice of the New Student Generation" (Flore Zephir); (4) "Accessing Cultural and Linguistic Input from Foreign Language Literacy Tests in the Beginning Language Classroom" (David J. Shook); (5) "Personalizing Foreign Language Instruction with World Wide Web Home Pages" (Joe Waltz); (6) "The Use of Writing Assistant Software: An Effective Tool in Improving Writing?" (Leona B. LeBlanc and Rebecca L. Chism); (7) "Connecting Content Areas via Music in the Elementary Foreign Language Class" (Daniel MacDougall); and (8) "Using the National Standards to Improve Foreign Language Articulation: An Alternative to Placement Exams" (Carolyn Lally). (Papers contain references.) (SM)

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SOUTHERN CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE TEACHING

DIMENSION '98

Communications, Cultures, Connections Comparisons, Communities

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Joel Walz
Leona LeBlanc
Rebecca Chism
Daniel MacDougall
Carolyn Lally

FL027414

David Alley and Paula Heusinkveld
Editors

Selected Proceedings of the 1998 Joint Conference of the
Southern Conference on Language Teaching
and the Foreign Language Association of Georgia

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Review and Acceptance Procedures

SCOLT Dimension

The procedures through which articles are reviewed and accepted for publication in the proceedings volume of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) actually begin with the submission of a proposal, including an abstract, to present a session at a SCOLT Annual Meeting. These proposals are submitted by mid-April, about ten months prior to each year's February conference. Once the proposal is received, it is read by members of the Program Committee.

After sessions have been accepted, presenters are contacted by the Editors and invited to submit an article for consideration for publication in *Dimension*. Presenters who are interested in publishing in the annual volume first submit a brief abstract of their article, which is read and approved by the two co-editors of *Dimension*. Prospective authors are then sent copies of the publication guidelines for *Dimension*. Authors submit five copies of the manuscript. The articles are then sent, with the title page containing the authors' names and affiliations removed, to the SCOLT Editorial Board, and each article is reviewed by at least two of these specialists. Normally, articles are sent to reviewers who have expertise in the area treated by the article. The reviewers are asked to make one of three recommendations: (1) publish as is; (2) publish after rewriting; (3) do not publish.

Once these recommendations are received by the Co-Editors, they read each article and make the final decision whether or not to publish it. As a result of these procedures, at least three individuals decide whether or not to include the oral presentation in the Annual Meeting of SCOLT, and then at least four different people read and approve the article before it is selected to appear in *Dimension*.

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INTRODUCTION

In a special ceremony at the annual meeting of ACTFL in Anaheim, California, in November, 1995, the national standards for foreign language education, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*, were officially released to the profession and to the public. This ceremony marked the culmination of an historic three-year effort "to define what students should know and be able to do as a result of foreign language study."[1] Reflecting the input of thousands of foreign language practitioners as well as the inspired efforts of the task force of educators who actually drafted the document, the National Standards may be said to represent the first real consensus about what the foreign language profession in this country expects students to know and accomplish.

The National Standards document is organized around five easy-to-remember goals: Communicate in languages other than English (**Communication**); Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures (**Cultures**); Connect with other disciplines and acquire information (**Connections**); Develop insight in the nature of language and culture (**Comparisons**); Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world (**Communities**). Since the publication of the Standards, serious efforts have been made to disseminate, interpret, and adapt these standards to specific languages and the particular needs of state foreign language organizations. Consistent with the thrust of such efforts, SCOLT (Southern Conference on Language Teaching) and FLAG (Foreign Language Association of Georgia) chose as the theme of their joint 1998 conference the "Five C's" of the National Standards. Held in Savannah, Georgia, on February 26-28, the 1998 SCOLT-FLAG conference attracted nearly one thousand registrants and exhibitors. In over eighty sessions and twelve half-day workshops, foreign language practitioners from both within and beyond the SCOLT region considered a multitude of strategies for making the National Standards a reality in our foreign language classrooms.

The purpose of this volume is to disseminate to a wider audience some of the most informative and pertinent presentations from the 1998 SCOLT-FLAG conference. The eight articles selected for inclusion in *Dimension '98* collectively address all five goals of the National Standards: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. The articles also address all four modalities of foreign language learning--listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as the underlying "fifth dimension," culture. In its totality, *Dimension '98* offers a myriad of ideas for implementing the national Standards for Foreign Language Learning at all levels of instruction.

In the opening article, "From Rhetoric to Reality: Applying Language-Specific Standards to the Spanish Classroom," María Amores and Frank Medley, Jr. begin by reviewing briefly the National Standards. Then, using these as a point of departure, they describe the efforts of the AATSP (American Association of

Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese) to create language-specific standards for Spanish, based on the generic National Standards. Amores and Medley then propose specific ways in which teachers can develop their curriculum and organize instructional strategies to attain the goals outlined in the language-specific document. The authors offer three detailed model lessons based on authentic texts on topics of contemporary interest from the Spanish press. In each lesson, a carefully planned sequence of oral and written activities helps students to establish connections with the material from the target culture and to communicate their reactions to it.

In the second article, "Standards for Teaching Cultures: the National Standards and the AATF Framework," Jayne Abrate demonstrates how the framework for cultural competence as developed by the AATF National Commission on Cultural Competence supports and expands upon the Cultures goal of the National Standards. The AATF (American Association of Teachers of French) framework for assessing cultural content on four levels was actually conceived prior to the development of the National Standards. Yet, as Abrate convincingly argues, the AATF framework provides a useful complement to the national standards culture goal. A particularly interesting feature of her article is a chart outlining four stages on the path to cross-cultural sensitivity.

In the third article of this volume, Flore Zéphir sounds an alarm about the precarious state of the study of French in the United States. She attributes the steady decline in French enrollments to the image of French as an elitist language to be learned by those who aspire to join a privileged class. The author forcefully states that this image is out-of-step with the utilitarian view of language favored by today's students. As a solution to this problem, Zéphir proposes a new French curriculum which reflects the diversity of the francophone world. By moving from a Eurocentric to a multicultural perspective, says the author, the study of French would better incorporate National Standard 5: *Students participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.*

David Shook notes that literary texts can provide a rich source of cultural input for foreign language students. However, due to the characterization of the study of literature as the focus of "advanced" language classes, the potential value of these texts at the early stages of language learning has generally been overlooked. In his article, "Accessing Cultural and Linguistic Input from Foreign Language Literary Texts in the Beginning Language Classroom," Shook offers a brief review of pertinent foreign language reading research, with emphasis on the nature of literature and its pitfalls and benefits for early stage learner-readers. Using a Spanish literary text with heavy cultural content as a model lesson, he then suggests pre-reading, reading, and postreading strategies to help students overcome potential misunderstandings and gain maximum benefit from the cultural and linguistic input inherent in the text. His article addresses Standards 2 (*Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures*) and 4 (*Develop insight into the nature of language and culture*).

The World Wide Web increases exponentially the possibilities for giving our foreign language students access to other cultures. However, as Joel Walz points out in the introduction to his article, "Personalizing Foreign Language Instruction with WWW Home Pages," most foreign language teachers who use the Web have focused only on gathering factual information and data about the target culture. Walz proposes using the Web to find home pages written by young native speakers of the languages we teach. Writing in terms the layman can understand, Walz explains how to use search engines to find sites of French, German and Hispanic people of the same age and with the same interests as our students, as well as web sites created by school classes from the target culture. The author then provides suggestions for a variety of class assignments based on these target-language home pages appropriate for elementary, middle school, high school, and college language students. By connecting with multilingual communities of young learners around the world (Standard 5), our students increase their insight into the nature of language and culture (Standard 4), as well as their ability to communicate in languages other than English (Standard 1).

In their article, "The Use of Writing Assisted Software as an Effective Tool in Improving Writing?" Leona LeBlanc and Rebecca Chism highlight Standard 1.3 of the National Standards: *Students present information, concepts and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.* Their focus is the impact of writing assistant computer software on foreign language composition skills. Using pre- and post-treatment samples, the authors compare the quality and complexity of the writing of beginning level students. A control group receives no additional training, while an experimental group receives instruction in the use of *Système-D*, a popular French software package containing a bilingual dictionary and a reference grammar. The results of the study encourage both the use of writing software and additional emphasis on writing as a language learning medium.

National Standard 3 encourages foreign language teachers to *connect with other disciplines.* In his article "Connecting Content Areas Via Music in the Elementary Foreign Language Class," Daniel MacDougall summarizes the instructional benefits of music for learning another language. Using examples appropriate for use in the elementary classroom, MacDougall demonstrates how music serves not only as a motivational device for students but also as an entree into other academic disciplines. The author provides a sample unit on rain forest ecology with an introductory song in Spanish about a toucan.

Carolyn Lally's article, "An Alternative Model for Effective Foreign Language Articulation," considers the search for valid and reliable placement procedures in light of the National Standards. The author asserts that in addition to setting communication goals for students, the National Standards should also promote increased dialogue between foreign language faculty at the elementary, middle, secondary and post-secondary levels. Lally argues that these different instructional levels represent different cultures whose members must learn to communicate with each other. When faculty at all levels utilize the standards as guidelines for both classroom instruction and communication with their colleagues, the result will be improved articulation, which will benefit all foreign language students.

In sum, the ten authors who have contributed to *Dimension '98* have proposed numerous strategies for understanding and implementing the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. It is our hope that this volume will make a useful contribution to the growing body of literature that will help us to make the National Standards a reality in our classrooms.

For a detailed, informative description of the sequence of events that began in September 1992 and culminated with the release of the National Standards in November 1995, see Lafayette and Draper's "Introduction," pp. 1-8 in Robert C. Lafayette and Jamie B. Draper, eds., *National Standards: A Catalyst for Reform* (Lincoln, IL: National Textbook, 1996).

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Acknowledgments

The Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) would again like to recognize the commitment of Valdosta State University in supporting the work of our organization and foreign language education in general. In particular, we would like to thank Lee Bradley for continuing as director of SCOLT publications, even though he retired as SCOLT's Executive Director in September, 1997. We are grateful both to Lee for his many years of service, and to our capable new Executive Director, Lynne McClendon, for providing strong leadership in this transition year for SCOLT.

The editors wish to thank the twelve nationally-prominent foreign language educators who served as the Editorial Board for *Dimension '98*. They scrupulously read every article submitted for publication and offered invaluable suggestions to the authors. They also made sound recommendations to the editors, who had to make difficult choices in selecting the articles for this volume from many excellent ones that were submitted. It is because of the professional knowledge of our eminently qualified Editorial Board that this publication has become recognized in the field of foreign language education. Simple thanks are not enough, but we are confident that the Board members realize the importance of their contribution to SCOLT and to the foreign language profession.

David Alley
Georgia Southern University

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April, 1998

1

From Rhetoric to Reality: Applying AATSP Standards to the Spanish Classroom

María J. Amores
Frank W. Medley, Jr.
West Virginia University

Introduction

Since the advent of the proficiency guidelines published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL 1986), our perception of teaching and learning foreign languages has become increasingly well defined. The emphasis has shifted to a greater consideration of student performance and less of teacher performance as indicators of program effectiveness. Increasingly, in the novice and intermediate levels of language learning we are attending more carefully to what students are able to do with the language, with less attention to what they know about the language. As their basic communication skills improve, so, too, do we begin to place greater emphasis on accuracy in all areas: structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, sociolinguistic, and cultural appropriateness, etc.

In May of 1994, a bill entitled *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* was signed into law. This legislation culminated an educational initiative begun in 1989 when the nation's governors met with President George C. Bush in Charlottesville, Virginia, "to discuss the state of American education" ("Standards..." 1994: 11). As a result of the concerns expressed at that meeting, a panel comprised of governors and educators was empowered to develop a set of statements that would articulate national educational goals.

Foreign languages was the last of the seven subject areas to receive funding to develop their discipline-specific standards. In order to obtain the funding, ACTFL took the initiative to establish a collaborative project, and by June of 1993 a joint effort of ACTFL, the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) resulted in the formation of a task force whose charge was to develop national standards for foreign language learning.

By the fall of 1994, the eleven-member task force had produced a first draft of the standards, which was widely distributed and made available for public review and comment. At the annual meeting of ACTFL in 1995, the finalized document was presented in a formal ceremony to a representative of the United States Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, who accepted it on behalf of the Secretary.

Taking their cues from the wording of the national goal statements, the task force organized the foreign language standards into five areas:

- Communicate in Languages Other Than English [Communication]
- Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures [Cultures]
- Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information [Connections]
- Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture [Comparisons]
- Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World [Communities]

These five areas—Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities—have become known as the "Five C's of Foreign Language Education," and are best described as ***content standards.*** Together, they represent "an unprecedented consensus among educators, business leaders, government, and the community on the definition and role of foreign language instruction in American Education" (*Executive Summary* n.d. [1996]: 1).

Two other important organizing principles that influenced development of the generic standards for foreign language learning were the notions of curricular elements and of communicative modes. The task force maintained that there are multiple curricular elements that "weave" among the five C's to form the fabric of language learning. Further, in order to become proficient, learners must be able to function in three modes: interpersonal, interpretative, and presentational. Detailed discussion of curricular elements and of communicative modes can be found in the National Standards (1996: 28-34).

In summarizing its work, the task force emphasized that the standards do not describe either the current status of foreign language education in this country or what is being attained by the majority of students studying foreign languages at this time. Instead, the purpose of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1996) should be perceived as a gauge against which to measure overall and long term improvement in our students in the years to come. These generic standards became the template to be used by the various AATs as they began to develop their own language-specific guidelines.

The AATSP Language-Specific Standards

In 1996 the AATSP established a 16-member task force to further particularize the generic foreign language standards to Spanish and Portuguese. A draft of the work of the committee is now being prepared for distribution and review, and the final manuscript is expected to be completed by September, 1998. The AATSP Standards specify the knowledge and abilities that all learners of Spanish and

Portuguese should acquire and address the special needs of heritage language learners that are often overlooked or cast aside. As with the generic document, the AATSP Standards are content-based and envision an ideal program where instruction begins in kindergarten and continues uninterrupted through primary school, middle school, high school and college. Standards and sample progress indicators are included for grades 4, 8, 12, 14, and 16. The progress indicators provide sample language-specific examples of achievable outcomes. As with the generic document, the progress indicators subsume and build upon those of preceding levels.

The AATSP Task Force concludes the introduction to their document with the following paragraph:

> Although the spirit of the AATSP Standards is visionary, the reality of Spanish and Portuguese education in the US today is quite different. Many school districts do not offer long sequences of instruction; learners may not have the opportunity to begin their study of Spanish or Portuguese until middle or high school, or even college. This document provides guidelines for planning extended-sequence Spanish and Portuguese programs, beginning in the early grades. Other schools do not have programs that are appropriate for heritage learners. With such multiple points of entry, the achievable outcomes must also vary. Individual learner characteristics (aptitude, motivation, prerequisite knowledge, etc.), as well as quality of instruction (program goals and expectations, facilities, materials, teachers) also affect the level of linguistic competence that is achieved. Given all of the foregoing variables, the issue of articulation is of paramount importance. Much work in the area is yet to be done, and the AATSP Standards offer a point of departure for program articulation as teachers, administrators, and curriculum coordinators strengthen the instructional context in their own districts, schools, and classrooms (AATSP Introduction 1997: 7-8).

The AATSP Standards provide examples, illustrations, and models, but it is largely up to us "as teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists" to design and implement the variety of activities necessary to develop our students' functional abilities in Spanish and Portuguese, and to create an atmosphere in which they are encouraged to put forth the effort necessary to master the language.

Addressing the Communication Goal through Sequenced Activities

The wording in the language-specific goals and standards emerging from the work of the AATSP task force resembles very closely that of the ACTFL generic document, and there is a major theme: students should be able to communicate effectively in Spanish as a result of their studies. As the task force observed in its commentary,

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> Effective communication includes the ability to understand and express oneself orally and in writing in situations that may be either planned and predictable, as well as those that are spontaneous and unpredictable. Thus, students must be able to participate appropriately in a range of contexts and in a variety of levels of formality (i.e., registers). They must be able to interact in communicative exchanges, either face-to-face or via technology; interpret what they observe, hear, read, and view, both in real-life interactions and in the media; and present information, concepts, and ideas, orally, visually, and in writing (AATSP Goal 1 1997: 1).

This goal is consonant with the modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, presentational) of the generic guidelines. Further, the task force emphasized that

> Students must be able to interact with a wide range of texts that they hear and read. Beyond assigning literal meaning to a language sample, learners must be able to recognize and interpret the text at the cultural, non-literal or figurative level. Text types encompass formal and informal language samples including both literary and non-literary materials (e.g., content-based texts in mathematics, science, and social studies, as well as novels, short stories and other genres, and other print and non-print items produced by and for native speakers of the language). As the learners' skills improve, they should be introduced to a variety of textual sources, levels of formality, and regional variations (AATSP 1997: 5).

As students develop their functional ability in Spanish, they expand the cognitive base upon which they construct new and more complex knowledge. With the movement from memorized to more creative use of language, students need to have the opportunity to develop their presentational skills. As the task force noted,

> Learners ... can be made aware of the conventions of purposeful writing, strategies and organization of composition, more formalized public speaking, etc., appropriate to the cultures. All learners must meet the cultural expectations regarding the different ways in which information, concepts, and ideas can be presented.

Based upon these principles, the following activities are offered as illustrations of approaches that can be taken in the classroom to facilitate attainment of the goals articulated in the Spanish standards. In order to provide examples of a range of activities that are appropriate for different levels of instruction, three detailed models are presented and discussed.

Model One: *Esquiar en Colorado.* Actividad de comprensión auditiva.
Antes de escuchar. [Preparation: Students are provided with a map of the region.]

A. You are going to listen to a radio commercial about skiing in famous resorts in Colorado. The following words will help you to better understand the passage. Read them before you listen.

pista	*slope, trail*	esquí de fondo	*cross country skiing*
pistas balizadas	*groomed trails*	bosque	*forest*
cumbre	*summit*	trineo	*sleigh, sled*

You will also hear the speaker say "estación de esquí." Considering that "esquí" means *ski*, can you guess a meaning for "estación" in this context?

B. Knowing that the speaker will talk about skiing in Colorado, what topics do you think may be included in the commercial? Make a list of at least four things. Save this list to use in Exercise C, below.

Al Escuchar. *C.* Look at the list of topics below. Then, listen to the speaker and place a check mark beside those topics mentioned. [Teacher reads script or plays a pre-recorded tape. See Appendix B.]

1. las mejores estaciones de esquí de USA están en Colorado
2. descripción del paisaje de Colorado
3. descripción del esquiador típico en estas estaciones
4. relato de la copa del mundo de esquí
5. las oportunidades que ofrecen las estaciones más famosas

Verify the list you prepared as activity B. Did you guess some of the information?

D. Now listen to the passage again, focusing on the details. Which of the following statements does the speaker mention? [Students respond by indicating *sí* or *no*.]

1. La nieve de Colorado es la mejor del mundo para esquiar.
2. Se puede practicar esquí de fondo, patinar, o deslizarse desde altas cumbres.
3. No asisten muchos esquiadores a las estaciones más famosas
4. Generalmente llueve y está muy nublado.
5. Hay restaurantes excelentes y muchos entretenimientos.
6. Aspen, Vail, Beaver Creek y Copper Mountain son las estaciones principales.

E. The speaker talks specifically about four famous ski resorts in Colorado. Listen to the passage one more time and complete Student Activity Master 1, (next page) identifying some of the information pertinent to each resort.

Después de escuchar. [Students are given a handout of an advertisement for a vacation resort. A sample text is included as Appendix C for purposes of illustration of the activities that are built around the realia.]

F. With a partner, choose one of the four main ski resorts in Colorado and design an advertisement for a local newspaper using the information in the chart. In preparation for your task, read the ad and answer the questions that follow.

1. Skim over the text and illustrations used to represent the different accommodations. Write the special features of each one in the space provided.
   PRINCIPE FELIPE:
   LAS LOMAS:
   INSTALACIONES:
2. Which lodging do you think each of the following people would choose?
   a. __________Un matrimonio quiere pasar unas vacaciones en un lugar tranquilo con sus hijos.

b. __________Una chica necesita relajarse del estrés del trabajo en una importante firma internacional.
c. __________A un hombre de negocios muy rico y su abogado les gusta hablar de asuntos importantes mientras practican actividades al aire libre.
d. __________A un grupo de amigos muy deportistas les gusta la vida sana.

Student Activity Master 1: Esquiar en Colorado

Aspen	Vail
1. Organización estilo USA: mucho deporte, pero gran comodidad.	1.
2.	2. La preferida entre los esquiadores expertos, mujeres y amantes del "après-ski."
3.	3.
4.	4. Un población fija de 6.000 privilegiados.
Beaver Creek	**Copper Mountain**
1. La estación mejor deseñadfa, la más cómoda y elegante des mundo.	1.
2.	2. Su éxito radica en el "esquí de la altas cumbres," mejores precios y más comodidad.
3.	3.
4. El lugar más elitista de la zona.	4. Se puede subir al pico más alto del área a pie o en helicóptero y descender al valle por entre bosques.

G. The purpose of ads, as you have seen, is to *sell* the product to prospective clients; therefore it is very important to know their interests (and psychological make-up!) in order to be convincing. With a partner, decide on the characteristics that would most likely describe the visitors to the different resorts in Colorado, and write them on Student Activity Master 2 (facing page). You may use the words and phrases below or your own.

extrovertido /a
muy atlético /a
profesional del esquí
le gusta la buena comida
romántico /a
le gusta el lujo
deportista
intelectual
disfruta con la naturaleza
le gusta la diversión
sensible
sofisticado /a

H. Now you are ready to write your advertisement. In what order are you going to present your information? Are you going to provide the reader with the amenities of the resort first and then appeal to the reader's interests and needs, or vice versa? Both ways are right, but make sure to write an interesting title and be creative.

Model Two: *La personalidad.* Actividad oral. [Preparation: Students are asked to bring pictures to the class that show different "personality types" and physical traits. Cartoons, drawings, and caricatures are especially good because they

Student Activity Master 2: Esquiar en Colorado

Aspen	Vail	Beaver Creek	Copper Mountain

establish distance between the students and actual individuals. The teacher should also bring several appropriate visuals for those students who arrive unprepared.]

Antes de hablar.

A. Using the illustrations brought to class, brainstorm descriptive words and expressions with the whole class and write them on the blackboard. The activity can begin by having students formulate questions (with the help of the teacher) that they might ask about the drawings they have brought. For example, "¿Cómo es físicamente la estudiante del dibujo? En tu opinión, ¿qué hace ella en su tiempo libre? ¿Qué rasgos de la personalidad asocias con la persona?"

B. Which personality traits do you associate with the following people and T.V. characters? Write at least three traits for each person listed below, using the words and expressions you know so far.

Mick Jagger
Bill Clinton
Michael Jackson
Madonna
Mother Teresa

Compare your lists to those of the rest of the class. Does everybody have similar opinions?

A ¡Conversar!

C. Working in pairs, arrange the following characteristics according to the categories in Student Activity Master 3 (next page). You can use a characteristic in more than one category.

D. Have students report their opinions to the class. The rest of students raise their hands to agree and disagree. They may follow the model below.

MODELO: -Pensamos que ser generoso es un rasgo hereditario
or típico de la mujer
-Estoy de acuerdo / No estoy de acuerdo

Después de hablar. Now you are going to read an excerpt from an interview that *Pearl Jam*, the popular music group, offered to a Spanish newspaper. In the interview, Eddie Vedder talks about music and about his philosophy of life. [See Appendix D.]

E. Scanning. Find the following words and expressions in the text and underline the sentences in which you find them.

a. desborda (*desbordar*)
b. giras
c. encerraba (*encerrar*)
d. actuación
e. 'los reyes del mambo'

F. Working with your partner, explain what you think these words mean according to the context where they appear. Then share your answers with the rest of the class. Do all of you agree about the meanings?

G. The following statements summarize the content of each paragraph. Skim the text to match each statement with the corresponding paragraph.

p.# ___ Eddie Vedder disfruta de su mundo interior y le gusta la soledad, la intimidad.
p.# ____Eddie cultiva una filosofía "anti-sistema;" no le interesa el éxito (*success*), le interesa más expresar las emociones con su música.
p.# ____Para Eddie, ser famoso tiene consecuencias muy negativas, especialmente en las relaciones personales.
p.# ____Eddie sabe que el éxito puede terminar algún día y que por esa razón los artistas no deben ser egoístas.
p.# ____Eddie Vedder da todo a su público cuando canta, por eso prefiere los conciertos con un número reducido de personas.

H. Go back and reread each paragraph, paying more attention to the details. Then, with your partner, identify key words or phrases that will help you determine Eddie Vedder's personality.

I. What do these words and phrases tell you about Eddie? Write down as many personality traits as you can about Eddie based on what you have just read.

J. Go back to the chart in section C, and compare the traits you have just attributed to Eddie Vedder to those you wrote in the "Rasgos típicos de la mujer" and "Rasgos típicos del hombre" categories. Have you modified your opinions? [Have students

Student Activity Master 3: La Personalidad

pesimista	extrovertido	optimista	solitario
hablador	romántico	seguro de si mismo	cómico
inteligente	introvertido	impulsivo	empollón
timido	egoísta	generoso	rebelde
sensible	serio	humilde	responsable
fiel	sentimental	¿ ?	¿ ?

Rasgos hereditarios	Rasgos adquiridos
Rasgos típicos de la mujer	Rasgos típicos del hombre

who have changed their minds report their new opinions to the class. They may follow the model.]

MODELO: Antes pensábamos que ser sentimental es una característica femenina, pero puede ser un rasgo típico del hombre también.

Model Three: *Nostalgia.* Actividad de lectura. [Preparation: For one week before beginning the unit, have students look for articles, reports, or news in newspapers and magazines about any topic related to Hispanics in the US. They should come to class on the first day of the unit prepared to summarize their findings and to give a personal critique in front of the class--in Spanish, of course.]

***Antes de leer*.**

A. With a partner, discuss the following questions:
   - a. ¿Qué grupo social representan los "chicanos"?
   - b. ¿Cómo se distribuye este grupo en los Estados Unidos?
   - c. ¿Presenta este grupo características culturales propias? Cita algunos ejemplos.
   - d. ¿Crees que los chicanos están social y culturalmente aceptados en los EE.UU? Justifica tu opinión.

B. Based on the information you have collected, list at least three pieces of information you would expect to find in a poem entitled *Yo soy Joaquín.*.

C. Share your list with your classmates.

Al leer. Skim the poem to determine whether or not these ideas are going to be treated by the poet. Report back to the class what you find.

***Yo soy Joaquín*, by Rodolfo González (1967)**

Yo soy Joaquín,
perdido en un mundo de confusión,
enganchado en el remolino de una sociedad gringa,
confundido por las reglas,
despreciado por las actitudes
sofocado por manipulaciones,
y destrozado por la sociedad moderna.
Mis padres
    perdieron la batalla económica
y conquistaron
    la lucha de supervivencia cultural.
Y (ahora!
  yo tengo que escoger
        en medio
    de la paradoja de
    triunfo del espíritu,
a despecho de hambre física,
        o
existir en la empuñada
de la neurosis social americana,

esterilización del alma
y un estómago repleto.
Sí,
vine de muy lejos a ninguna parte,
desinclinadamente arrastrado por ese
gigante, monstruoso, técnico, e
industrial llamado
Progreso
y éxito angloamericano ...
Yo mismo me miro.
Observo a mis hermanos.
Lloro lágrimas de desgracia.
Siembro semillas de odio.
Me retiro a la seguridad dentro del
círculo de vida--
(González 1967: 3)

Después de leer.

D. Read the poem again, but this time pay more attention to the details. Then determine whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F) according to the information in the poem. Below you will find a few words that may be helpful to you.

enganchado	*hooked*	remolino	*whirlpool*
empuñada	*grasp*	repleto	*full*
desinclinadamente	*unwillingly*	siembro	*I sow*

1. Joaquín está completamente integrado en la sociedad americana.
2. Los padres de Joaquín vinieron a los EE.UU. por razones económicas.
3. Los ideales son más importantes para Joaquín que ninguna otra cosa.
4. Por el tono del poema, es evidente que Joaquín tiene una buena posición económica en los EE.UU.

E. Read the poem again and, working with a partner, prepare a list of nouns and adjectives that Joaquín attributes to both American and Chicano societies. Then answer the following questions.

1. ¿Cómo considera Joaquín las dos sociedades?
2. ¿Cómo se siente Joaquín en estos dos mundos?
3. ¿Qué lugar elige Joaquín para quedarse? ¿Por qué considera su elección una paradoja?
4. En tu opinión, ¿qué quieren decir las dos últimas líneas del poema?

F. Most texts carry a title that is sometimes indicative of the content. Think of the title of the poem you have just read. In your opinion, who or what does Joaquín represent?

a. ¿un individuo?
b. ¿un grupo?
c. ¿...?

Un paso más: Una presentación

G. You are going to learn more about Hispanic immigration to the United States. The tables on the next page contain recent statistics about this phenomenon. With a classmate, look at the tables and complete the paragraph that follows.

La mayoría de los inmigrantes hispanos en los Estados Unidos vienen de ______________. Sólo en la última década han llegado un total de ________ de personas. La zona preferida por estos inmigrantes es __________, seguramente por la proximidad a su país de origen. Entre 1971-1980, un total de 276,800 de inmigrantes llegaron de __________ debido a razones políticas, fundamentalmente. En la última década, el número de inmigrantes de este país ha disminuido. Sin embargo, la inmigración procedente de otros países ha aumentado debido a diversas razones. Por ejemplo ________________ .....

H. Based on the statistics, as well as on the information gathered from the poems and on your own experience, discuss the following questions in groups of four. One member of the group will have to present your conclusions to the class.

1. ¿Creen que la inmigración hispana a los Estados Unidos ha aumentado en los últimos años? ¿Por qué?
2. ¿Cómo ha cambiado la composición étnica de los inmigrantes hispanos en las últimas décadas? ¿A qué creen que es debido?
3. ¿Por qué crees que las distintas etnias hispanas se agrupan, generalmente, en las mismas zonas?
4. ¿Piensan que la inmigración es un problema para los Estados Unidos? Justifica la respuesta. ¿Qué tipo de problemas creen que los inmigrantes pueden tener cuando llegan a EE.UU?

Summary and Conclusion

One of the principal tenets of the AATSP Standards is that "language and communication are at the heart of the human experience," and that we "must educate students who are equipped linguistically and culturally to communicate effectively in multilingual, multicultural societies both in this country and abroad" (AATSP Statement of Philosophy 1997: 1). These models are designed to expand the range of real-life experiences our students have with language. They reflect real-life use of language, both in terms of communicative interactions between individuals and in terms of using language to acquire new information (i.e., content-based activities). We can develop these important "Connections" by designing new courses that have a regional or global focus, or that provide a cultural template that the learner might use to cast a different perspective on the content of a seemingly unrelated course. While the questions and issues may differ from course to course, the objective is the same: to help our students learn to think more globally and less provincially. We want to help them become aware that the world has problems that are universal in the sense that they are common to all. It is the way groups respond to and resolve these problems that become the hallmark of the culture, and cultures are not better or worse, just different.

Tabla 1 Inmigrantes a los Estados Unidos por país de origen

	1961-1970	**1971-1980**	**1981-90**
Argentina	42,1*	25,1	25,7
Chile	11,5	17,5	23,4
Columbia	70,3	77,6	124,4
Costa Rica	17,4	12,1	15,5
Cuba	256,8	276,8	159,2
Ecuador	37,0	50,2	56,0
El Salvador	15,0	34,4	214,6
España	30,5	30,0	15,8
Guatemala	15,4	25,6	87,9
Honduras	15,5	17,2	49,5
México	443,3	637,2	1.653,3
Nicaragua	10,1	13,0	554,1
Panamá	18,4	22,7	29,0
Perú	18,6	29,1	64,4
República Dominicana	94,1	148,0	251,8
Venezuela	8,5	7,1	17,9

* Cifras en miles

Fuente: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. *Statistical Yearbook*, annual.

(Table adapted from Cubillos 1996:66. Used with permission.)

Tabla 2 Inmigrantes admitidos en 1991 por principal lugar de origen y de residencia

	México	El Salvador	República Dominicana
Total	**946.167 ***	**47.351**	**41.405**
Anaheim-Santa Ana	40.778	861	3
Chicago	30.960	280	63
Houston	34.388	5.524	79
Los Angeles	153.918	16.111	45
Miami	5.192	1.070	1.724
Nueva York	3.824	1.545	21.309
San Diego	47.035	185	9

*Cifras en miles

Fuente: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. *Statistical Yearbook*, annual.

(Table adapted from Cubillos 1996:67. Used with permission.)

In those schools or degree programs where foreign language requirements exist, they are often based on the premise that "as students acquire foreign language competence they also acquire a broad awareness of foreign cultures and a deeper understanding of language as a human phenomenon" (Allen, et al. 1992: 11). If we are to be effective in helping our students attain the goals set forth and discussed in the AATSP Standards, we must provide them with ongoing opportunities to work with authentic texts that serve as bases for rich and varied curricular experiences. In addition to study of the language system itself, students must acquire communication strategies that enable them to bridge the gaps likely to occur as they encounter new situations, and they must have an awareness of the culture of the language community. They must become increasingly aware of the strategies that work best for them as they learn language, and maintain a continuing effort to improve their mastery of the language.

Our programs should include content that is both interesting and challenging, and that expands their knowledge in areas other than language. Exercises in critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and problem-solving should be hallmarks of our curriculum in Spanish, and we should provide our students with the opportunity to take advantage of new and emerging technologies that will enhance their performance as learners.

The model activities presented above demonstrate the characteristics of an effective program with sequenced tasks which students carry out on a daily basis. Underlying these activities are several premises and principles upon which they are constructed, and which can serve as guidelines as teachers create their own exercises. First, the activities incorporate the framework of communicative modes that includes interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational capabilities, each of which "involves a particular link between language and the underlying culture that is developed over time "(ACTFL 1996: 32).

Another assumption guiding the sequencing of the sets of activities is that students must be made aware of what is important in the sample text (either oral or written) with which they are working. This awareness is consonant with premises such as the noticing hypothesis and the role of consciousness (Schmidt 1990; Schmidt and Frota 1986), and the concept of input enhancement (Sharwood Smith 1993), all of which suggest that learners must be consciously aware of the contribution of form and meaning at the word and phrase level if they are going to develop and improve their capability to receive and send information in the language. The approach also reflects several of the input processing hypotheses postulated and discussed by Lee and VanPatten in their call for teachers to begin "re-thinking grammar instruction" (Lee & VanPatten 1995: 96-97).

A major premise that influences the sequencing of activities within the models presented is that students learn language through an iterative process, repeatedly shifting from receptive to productive processing strategies. During developmental stages, learners generally are able to derive meaning from text generated by another source, especially if it is in written form, more easily than they can produce the language (i.e., speak or write).

All of the models are built around authentic materials, thus sensitizing students to the meaning of the language within a cultural context, as well as to its form. By taking multiple "passes" at the same text, students are guided and encouraged to delve beyond the literal meaning of the words and phrases to understand the message at a deeper level. Further, the models require students to do something with the information gathered, which reflects the principle that language is used in different ways and for different purposes. Until both form and meaning are attended to, comprehension is not complete.

Finally, all of the models conclude by connecting to the real world of the students as it is reflected in their other studies. What the students are learning in their Spanish classrooms all can be made to relate at one time or another to math, science, language arts, history, and other courses they are taking. In this way, the *C* of *Communication* makes *Connections* with other bodies of knowledge and expands the learners' perspectives beyond that of the monolingual speaker of English.

Using the AATSP Standards as guidelines in our planning and instruction and providing the direction, encouragement, and learning experiences that our students need if they are to use Spanish in meaningful ways will enable us to move more readily from rhetoric to reality in the Spanish classroom.

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Appendix A. Preliminary Draft of Goals and Standards, AATSP.

Goal 1 Communicate in Spanish
- Standard 1.1 Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
- Standard 1.2 Students understand and interpret written and spoken Spanish on a variety of topics.
- Standard 1.3 Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics in Spanish.

Goal 2: Gain knowledge and understanding of Spanish cultures
- Standard 2.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures of Spanish speakers.
- Standard 2.2 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the different Spanish cultures.

Goal 3: Connect with other disciplines and acquire information
- Standard 3.1 Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through Spanish.
- Standard 3.2 Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the Spanish language and its many cultures.

Goal 4 Develop insights into the nature of language and culture
- Standard 4.1 Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons between the language studied and their own.
- Standard 4.2 Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons between the cultures studied and their own.

Goal 5 Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world
- Standard 5.1 Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.
- Standard 5.2 Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using Spanish for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

Appendix B. *Esquiar en Colorado.* Audio Script.

Dicen los norteamericanos que si uno quiere saber de verdad lo que es el esquí, debe ir a Colorado, al corazón de las Rocosas. Junto a la mejor nieve del mundo y entre paisajes espectaculares, se agrupan las mejores estaciones del país, con clases para novatos, un "après-ski" inmejorable, tiendas de lujo, buenos restaurantes y una excitante vida nocturna.

Colorado es un paraíso blanco. La nieve en polvo lo cubre todo; hay pistas para todos los niveles, sin aglomeraciones, y el sol es un invitado casi permanente. Once millones de esquiadores pasan cada año por Aspen, Vail, Beaver Creek, Copper Mountain y otros destinos que suenan a leyenda. Un escenario para cada sueño. Altas cumbres, pistas olímpicas, bosques para practicar el esquí de fondo, zonas para hacer fuera pista, plazas heladas para patinar....

El esquí en Estados Unidos no es como el esquí en pueblos pequeños de España, Francia o Austria. En Estados Unidos todo es nuevo y lujoso. No existen pueblos exactamente, sino modernos complejos y soberbios hoteles. Aspen y Vail, situadas cerca de pueblos, son excepciones. En Aspen está todo perfectamente organizado al estilo U.S.A.: deporte en plena naturaleza, pero sin renunciar a las comodidades. De las muchas pistas balizadas que recorren Aspen, algunas incluso tienen música rock ambiental. Aspen es un pueblo pequeño y cuidado, en el que no se necesita el coche, se encuentra buena comida y grandes posibilidades para la diversión. ¿Te gustaría hacer excursiones en trineo o a caballo? Todo es posible, incluso patinar sobre el hielo a la luz de la luna o tomar un refresco en un "jacuzzi" rodeado de nieve.

Considerada como la mejor estación de esquí de Norteamérica, Vail es la preferida entre los esquiadores expertos, mujeres y los amantes del "après-ski." Muchos de los propietarios de restaurantes y hoteles de la zona tienen raíces alemanas, francesas, austriacas.... La influencia de los europeos inspiró un ambiente más alpino y sofisticado, diferente de Aspen. Vail, situado en el National White River Forest, tiene una población fija de 6.000 privilegiados.

Beaver Creek es uno de los complejos de esquí mejor diseñados, más elegantes y cómodos del mundo. Hay casas de diez millones de dólares y apartamentos de tres millones, pistas de esquí que llegan directamente a residencias particulares, un campo de golf entre montañas, restaurantes exclusivos en las pistas.... Con sólo 150 residentes fijos, Beaver Creek es el lugar más elitista de la zona.

Copper Mountain es la estación más pequeña y modesta de las cuatro. Su éxito se basa en el "esquí de las altas cumbres," la mayor tranquilidad y los mejores precios. Tiene 98 pistas estrechas con "bumps" agrupadas en tres secciones: principiantes, expertos y muy expertos. Solo o acompañado por el personal de la estación, puedes subir, a pie o en helicóptero, a los picos más altos de la zona. Después, fuera de la pista y entre bosques, te espera un apasionante descenso hacia el valle. (Adapted from *Blanco y Negro,* Semanario de ABC, Dec 20, 1996)

Appendix C. Text of Advertisement. Hyatt La Manga Club Resort.

Hyatt La Manga Club Resort, un mundo para todos

En el litorial más misterioso del Mediterráneo se sitúa el complejo Hyatt La Manga Club Resort. Un nuevo estilo de vacaciones que combina la posibilidad de alojarse en un hotel, o en apartamentos de lujo. Ofreciendo al cliente numerosas actividades deportivas y la meticulosa atención que distingue a Hyatt.

PRINCIPE FELIPE Hotel de 5 estrellas, construido sobre una colina con vistas al Campo de Golf y al mar. Dispone de 192 habitaciones decoradas con excelente gusto.

LAS LOMAS Apartamentos que forman un pequeño pueblo mediterréneo idealmente emplazado. Disponen de todo tipo de detalles para que usted pase unas inolvidables vacaciones en la intimidad de su familia.

INSTALACIONES Su idílico entorno y su clima, invitan a la práctica de todo tipo de actividades. Tres campos de golf, diecisiete pistas de tenis, centro de salud y belleza, deportes acuáticos, paseos a caballo y Camp Hyatt para los niños.

Para más información, llame al teléfono (968) 13 74 08

[adaptado de *El País Semanal*, núm. 119, 30 de mayo 1993]

Appendix D. Entrevista con Eddie Vedder.

1 Yo estaba en una cafetería cuando una persona me reconoció. Mi reacción fue ignorarla. La camarera me preguntó si no me gustaba ser famoso y las consecuencias que ser famoso suponía. Yo le repondí que ser famoso no significaba nada para mí, que no tenía importancia. Ella me repondió 'entonces has equivocado la profesión'. Creo que tenía mucha razón. Porque cuando empiezas a componer música, muchas veces lo haces para expresarte. Nunca piensas en la fama y que algún día puedes salir en la revista *Times*.

2 Cuando llega la fama todo te desborda. Por ejemplo, es muy difícil conservar las amistades. En esta profesión tienes que viajar mucho y tus amigos no comprenden que no puedes estar cerca de ellos como antes. Llega un momento en que las personas que trabajan contigo, los técnicos de sonido, etc., son la única familia que tienes. Durante las giras conocemos a muchas personas, pero sólo es posible establecer con ellos una amistad ocasional.

3 Recuerdo que cuando era pequeño me encerraba en el cuarto de baño porque quería escaparme del mundo. Quizá ahora, cuando reflejo alguna de esas experiencias en una canción es porque también trato de escaparme del mundo.

4 No me gusta tocar en grandes locales, en grandes estadios porque me siento muy pequeño. Pero sé que tenemos que hacerlo porque es mucha la gente que quiere asistir a nuestros conciertos. Además, doy una parte de mí al público en cada actuación; muchas veces, me doy completamente, y tengo que controlarme para conservar algo para mí. Porque si lo das todo en las actuaciones, no tienes nada para ofrecer a tus amigos.

5 Estamos encantadísimos con la respuesta del público en todo el mundo, pero todavía nos sentimos muy inseguros en algunos aspectos. Aunque hablen de nosotros en las revistas o en la televisión, no nos creemos 'los reyes del mambo.' Y ningún artista debe tener tanto ego y pensar que es el mejor porque puede ocurrir que un día asistas a un concierto y encuentres a un chico que toca la guitarra o canta mejor que tú. (Adapted from *Heavy Rock* núm. 35, March 1997)

2

Standards for Teaching Cultures: The National Standards and the AATF Framework

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Since the publication in 1996 of the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*, considerable effort has been expended in outlining how other standards projects fit into the National Standards structure. Although developed independently of the national project, the framework for cultural competence envisioned by the AATF National Commission on Cultural Competence (Singerman 1996) supports and expands upon the Cultures goal of the National Standards. Even though state foreign language organizations, state departments of education, and individual language groups want to create their own sets of guidelines, it is important that they do not duplicate work that has already been accomplished and that the resulting documents be compatible. By aligning local efforts with the national document, each entity can provide its own perspective on foreign language standards while remaining within the parameters outlined nationally. This article will demonstrate how the national and AATF projects fit together and suggest ways in which the other National Standards goals (Communication, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) can be similarly treated.

It is vital from a professional as well as a political perspective that the foreign language teaching profession be in agreement about what students should have learned at various checkpoints. The all-encompassing nature of language makes the definition of the linguistic, cultural, and paralinguistic elements to be evaluated a difficult task. To further complicate matters, a cacophony of models can prove self-defeating when viewed by outsiders such as administrators, school boards, or politicians. Precise definitions, thoughtful, well-reasoned analyses, and realistic progress indicators give legitimacy to what takes place in the classroom.

The generic National Standards offer a comprehensive model for foreign language standards and provide a reference point for groups developing their own documents. The original partners in the National Standards project, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and

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Portuguese (AATSP), have invited representatives of the Classics, Chinese, Italian, Japanese, and Russian language associations to collaborate on language-specific adaptations of the National Standards, with funding provided by sales of the generic document. After considering questions such as how to deal with heritage learners, multiple entry points, or the difficulty of the language for American students, each language's task force can develop sample progress indicators specific to the language, its culture, and available resources.

As methodologies and standards have evolved, the cultural component has occupied an increasingly central role in communication (Seelye 1987; Robinson-Stuart and Nocon 1996). From communicative competence to proficiency, from the four skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking to a fifth cultural skill, researchers and foreign language professionals have recognized the necessity of acquiring cultural competence commensurate with the linguistic skills learned, although they are perhaps not yet in agreement as to how that can best be accomplished. As Fischer states: "Communication can be successful only if both speaker and listener understand the connotations and cultural implications of language. Therefore, culture cannot be an 'add-on' in the foreign language classroom but must be integrated into linguistic learning" 1994:74). The weave image of the five C's in the National Standards (1996:29) gives a visual representation of this idea.

In 1993, the AATF National Commission on Cultural Competence set out to define cultural competence and proposed indicators to measure its attainment in French. This process has proven to be arduous , since teachers as well as textbook publishers seem to have their own individual definitions of culture and determinedly interject that particular "culture" into the curriculum. The grand Culture of great art, literature, or music that traditionally has dominated in language classrooms, particularly in French, now competes with culture in the anthropological sense, the means and patterns of organizing daily life, for a place in the curriculum. Certainly, the latter is crucial to language proficiency at all levels. The fine arts and literature constitute only one component of the broad spectrum of knowledge that proficient speakers of a language should possess, an element which grows in importance as the learner becomes more and more proficient in the target language and culture.

The National Standards define culture as "the philosophical perspectives, the behavioral practices, and the products . . . of a society" (1996:43) and separate the Cultures goal into two standards: "Standard 2.1. Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied" and "Standard 2.2. Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied" (1996:46-47). By defining culture as the objects (products), behaviors (practices), and beliefs (perspectives) of a people, this goal offers an organizing principle for the cultural content of language courses. Similarly, the AATF document, *Acquiring Cross-Cultural Competence: Four Stages for Students of French*, provides another organizing structure for cultural mastery. Divided into two sections, this framework discusses first the tools needed to acquire cultural competence—empathy and the ability to observe and analyze culture—and secondly the content of cultural knowledge.

Before learners begin to acquire proficiency in another cultural system, they must develop empathy, defined as an "informed openness to other cultures" Singerman 1996:11). This openness constitutes a prerequisite to the ability to observe and analyze objectively another culture. As Mantle-Bromley states, "Teachers, then, not only need to help students revise their linguistic patterns, they likewise need to help students revise their cultural patterns" (1992:117). The global nature of culture requires students to be able to observe cultural behavior and artifacts in an informed manner, to formulate hypotheses, and to draw appropriate conclusions in order to achieve any significant level of competence. To prevent "culture overload" which might lead a frustrated learner into stereotypes and overgeneralizations, teachers and learners must have a system for organizing and processing cultural information. The seven categories enumerated in the AATF framework[1] are:

1. Communication in Cultural Context
2. The Value System
3. Social Patterns and Conventions
4. Social Institutions
5. Geography and the Environment
6. History
7. Literature and the Arts

Interrelated and in many cases overlapping, these categories nonetheless provide one way to organize cultural learning.

Communication in Cultural Context refers to the sociolinguistic and paralinguistic phenomena surrounding communication in a specific situation. Along with Social Patterns and Conventions, it represents the behaviors or "practices" of a culture. The Value System corresponds to its beliefs or "perspectives," and the other categories represent the institutions and objects generated by a culture, that is, its "products." This rough comparison shows clearly that both the National Standards and the AATF framework consider the same elements of human society, even if the terminology differs.

The AATF document divides the acquisition of cultural competence into four stages which do not correspond to the arbitrary 4-8-12 grade sequence of the National Standards. These stages cover the entire range of cultural proficiency from Stage 1: Elementary, Stage 2: Basic Intercultural Skills, and Stage 3: Social Competence to Stage 4: Socioprofessional Capability. Obviously, Stage 4, and even much of Stage 3, remain beyond the scope of what a typical twelfth-grade student can realistically achieve, even in a full K-12 sequence. The cognitive skills, general knowledge, and exposure to the culture required for socioprofessional capability in another culture require more advanced study. In fact, Stage 4 competence would usually require study beyond an undergraduate major in the language.

Unlike the Communication goal, which relies on mastery and use of the four skills and constitutes the foundation of most foreign language instruction, the other C's—Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities--depend heavily on the cognitive skills of the student; therefore, their progress is influenced as much by age, experience, and maturity level as by the course sequence followed. Consequently, the implementation of these goals necessitates more involved explanations, systems, and methodologies than the purely linguistic aspects of language learning and offers less room for discrete item presentations and evaluation. For example, it is clear that a fourth-grade student who has studied French since kindergarten will have a very different level of cultural competence from that of a twelfth-grade student having completed the same amount of study, but "learners should function culturally at a level at least equal to their linguistic ability" (Abrate 1996:30). The chart in Table 1 offers a graphic representation[2] of the four stages in the development of full cultural competence proposed by the AATF Commission. Progression from one stage to the next will be far more rapid as the student gets older, but they cannot skip a stage.

Table 1. The Four Stages of Cultural Competence

Level	Characterization	Description	Organizer
Stage 1 (K-8, 1st-2nd year high school, first semester university)	imitation recognition *stereotypes*	basic vocabulary, iconography, basic behaviors, beginning awareness of what is culture	what who *identification*
Stage 2 (high school; 2nd semester to 2nd-3rd year university)	observation hypothesis *generalizations*	ability to recognize some cultural phenomena, awareness of own culture's influence	when where how *context*
Stage 3 (5th year high school/AP, undergraduate major)	analysis explanation *particularization*	ability to recognize and analyze phenomena within the framework of each culture	why *motivation*
Stage 4 (educated native speaker)	full participation and nuanced understanding *internalization*	broad understanding of cultural phenomena, geographical, social, historical, political, religious, economic influences and manifestations of them	because *integration*

The list of indicators for each category and trait at each level offers useful starting points for teachers seeking to incorporate a strong cultural component into their curriculum. While the National Standards indicators remain more general, those of the AATF framework deal very specifically with aspects of French and francophone cultures. Typically, the cultural subjects dealt with in textbooks and classrooms—food, family, friends, school, leisure activities, work—remain the same as students advance through their study of the language. However, the observation and analysis which students are asked to perform on these topics are intended to develop their growing awareness of the cultural implications of language.

At a beginning level students observe and imitate eating patterns and identify food items particular to the culture, for instance, and then in Stage 2 proceed to make generalizations or hypotheses about these behaviors and objects which then will be confirmed, refined, or rejected based on further observation. At Stage 3 they begin to understand these practices or products within the context of the target culture. At the highest level a learner will have internalized the behaviors and gained sufficient understanding of the foreign culture to participate in it as an educated native speaker. Given the progressive nature and complexity of both linguistic and cultural mastery, progress indicators provide sample benchmarks for judging whether a student has reached a certain level of competence and suggest items to be mastered rather than offering absolute prescriptions for what must be taught.

Likewise, if one analyzes the indicators in the National Standards document and compares them to these four stages, it is evident that progression from one level to the next follows a similar pattern. At Grade 4 students "observe, identify ... use appropriate gestures and oral expressions for ... common classroom interactions" (1996:46), comparable to the imitation and recognition aspects of Stage 1. By Grade 8, students are expected in the generic standards to "analyze" as well. Finally, students at Grade 12 should be able to "identify, examine and discuss connections between cultural perspectives and socially approved behavioral patterns" (1996:47). Implicit in the progress indicators of the National Standards is the evolution from one level to the next that is arbitrarily divided in Grades 4, 8, and 12. The AATF framework avoids such rigid divisions.

Both the National Standards and the AATF framework for cultural competence seek to encourage two fundamental principles in the acquisition of cultural awareness: 1) culture is not a separate entity in language learning and 2) anecdotal, stereotypical presentations of cultural phenomena do not present an accurate picture of a culture and are to be avoided. Although often treated as a separate fifth skill, cultural proficiency is inseparable from language proficiency. Knowing that formal and informal forms of address exist in a given language and conjugating the verb correctly do not help a student know when to use one form over the other. Mastery of appropriate cultural behavior and awareness of a culture's value system and traditions is essential to knowing how to respond in any given situation, to participate intelligently in interactions with speakers of the language, and to make informed observations and interpretations of the culture.

Many textbooks present cultural information in an anecdotal way with brief descriptions, usually in English, of schools, family celebrations, or restaurants, for instance. This type of presentation, almost as an aside, invites stereotyping rather than meaningful consideration of the other culture. Either students receive the impression that cultural differences really have little significance, or the one or two points highlighted take on too much importance. Moreover, culture is not a static thing; rather it is " . . . part of the process of living and being in the world, the part that is necessary for making meaning" (Robinson-Stuart and Nocon 1996:432). The texture and nuance of culture is best suited to ongoing, in-depth study over time, video presentations, or direct exposure to the culture or its representatives, but any attempt to extract examples can easily lead to overgeneralization. The emphasis on observation and analysis in the AATF framework and its inclusion of empathy as a fundamental prerequisite for cultural competence represent an effort to address this problem. Finally, the integration of both the products and practices of culture with its perspectives in the National Standards document links cultural phenomena to the underlying beliefs that influence their development and give them meaning. Continued emphasis on the process and the rationale rather than on the end result is vital to creating a nuanced, accurate view of a culture for the student. This approach is never more true than when the student is unable to experience the target culture firsthand.

Ultimately, both the National Standards and the AATF documents represent an attempt to codify what is actually occurring in many classrooms across the country and to encourage others to emulate these models. The development of language-specific and goal-specific implementations of the National Standards document will further enrich the teaching of foreign languages and offer practical steps for translating the generic goals into the classroom. Definitions, methodological considerations, strategies, and age- or level-appropriate progress indicators for Connections, Comparisons, and Communities will provide instructors with the necessary means to incorporate these goals directly into their teaching, just as they have been able to do with culture. Although the AATF framework for cultural competence was not written as an off-shoot of the national document, its structure and progress indicators fit very closely with the national Cultures goal and demonstrate how similar efforts to define the other goals and apply them to specific languages can be achieved.

Notes

1. The Commission on Cultural Competence Website (http://www.siu.edu~aatf) organizes links to Web documents according to these categories. The Commission is also preparing a second volume of pedagogical applications to accompany the framework.
2. This table was developed and presented at a session presented by the author entitled "Organizing Culture: Spiraling Toward a Deeper Understanding of Another People" at the Joint ICTFL/FLAM Conference, October 1996, St. Louis, MO.

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New Directions in the Study of French: Toward a Francophone Revolution Language Choice of the New Student Generation

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In the past twenty years, the field of French language studies has been experiencing a serious crisis. This crisis is evident in the steady decline in enrollment that started in the late sixties. Both at the high school and college levels, instructors lament the fact that students' interests have shifted away from French to Spanish, to which they attribute more practical advantages.[1] In their extensive study of foreign language enrollment in institutions of higher education, Brod and Huber (1992) report that, nationally, French enrollment dropped from 388,096 in 1968 to 272,472 in 1990, enduring a net loss of 29.8%. However, while French enrollment decreased, Spanish enjoyed a substantial gain of 46.3%, as enrollment jumped from 364,870 to 533,944 during the same period. In a subsequent study, Brod and Huber (1997) document a similar pattern for the period ranging from 1990 to 1995. During this period, French sustained a 24.6% decline, enrolling 205,351 students, while Spanish grew by 13.5% with an enrollment of 606,286 students (See Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1.

French enrollment

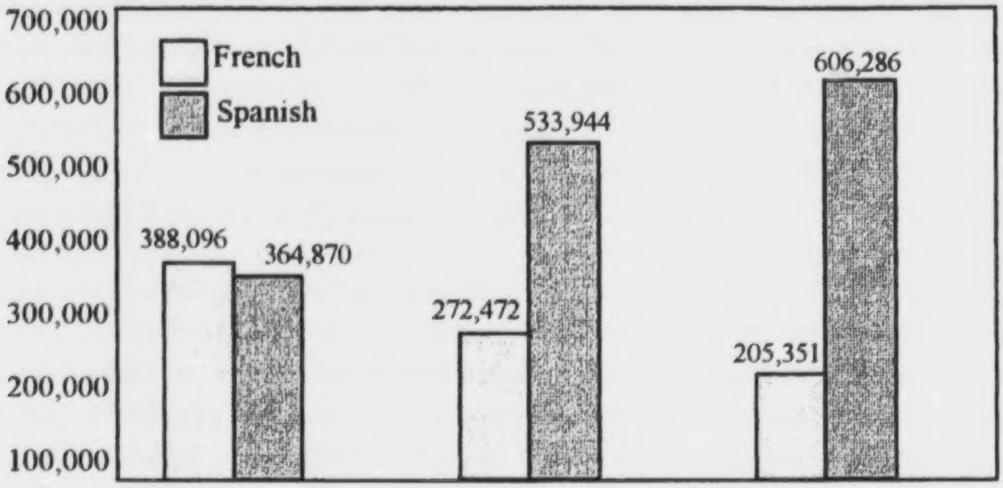
1968		**1990**		**1995**
338,096		272,472		205,351
	⟷ 29.8% decline		⟷ 24.6% decline	

Table 2.

Spanish enrollment

1968		**1990**		**1995**
364,870		533,944		606,286
	⟷ 43.6% increase		⟷ 13.5% increase	

Figure 1.



Another study conducted by Guntermann, Hendrickson, and Urioste (1996) further attests to this problem. Their study, conducted at a large southwestern public university, revealed that the number of Spanish students more than doubled at the lower levels in a ten-year period (1985-1995) whereas French lost more than 100 lower-division students (p. 6). A similar situation exists at my own institution. In the fall of 1996, the elementary Spanish classes (first three semesters) had a total of 1,361 students, compared to the French classes in which 416 students were enrolled.

There are several factors that account for this undeniable predilection for Spanish on the part of the student population. First, the rapid growth of the Spanish-speaking population in the last twenty years, as a result of immigration (mainly from Mexico, Latin America, and the Caribbean), increased the presence of the Spanish language inside our own borders. Indeed, one cannot travel through some regions of the country, particularly Southern California, the Southwest, and Florida, not to mention major urban areas, without coming in contact with Spanish. Further, Spanish has found a place in the media, especially television and radio, as well as films and print media. As a consequence, the Spanish language in the United States is a reality and is not perceived as being associated with "far away" places, peoples, and cultures. Given this reality, Spanish is no longer a foreign language; it is a second language, as Valdman (1995 and 1996) rightly asserts. The new status of Spanish in the country has contributed to its attractiveness to current college student populations. In fact, many students hold the belief that it is undeniably the second language of urban America and a language that can offer significant advantages to them, particularly with regard to employment.

It is relevant to note that the "new student generation," according to Lively (1997), tends to be much more career-oriented. She attributes this fact to the "maturity" of this population. Quoting from an article in the *College Board News,* she reports "that students over twenty-four are becoming the norm at United States colleges," and that "the surge in the adult college population reflects a need for skills and knowledge in order to enter, advance, and change careers" (pp. 32-33). She goes on to say that this new type of student is "consumer-oriented, pragmatic and goal directed" (p. 33). Based on personal experience with current college students, one might add that the same concern for employment and career development is also present among those under twenty-four. Guntermann, Hendrickson, and Urioste's study presents similar findings. When questioned about their hopes and plans for using Spanish, the category most frequently mentioned by Spanish students was career/profession/job, followed by conversation with Spanish speakers (1996:16). The Spanish-speaking population of the United States undoubtedly represents an ideal consumer pool that prospective members of the work force (i.e, current college students) are vigorously targeting. They see a potential use for Spanish in such careers as business, medicine, teaching, law, broadcasting, counseling, law enforcement, social work, journalism, and nursing. Another study was conducted by Siskin, Knowles, and Davis (1996) in order to find out the reasons for students' choice of language. This study underscores once again the perceived utility of Spanish, particularly in the business sphere and for everyday communication. As the authors report (p. 45), typical students' answers included: "It is very useful for jobs in the United States and throughout the world," "I feel it will help me in my career as a doctor to communicate with my patients." In short, the utilitarian or instrumental dimensions of Spanish have made it the most popular choice among all foreign languages offered at universities, and appear to satisfy students' desires to enhance their marketability.

Contrary to Spanish, French is not perceived to be as practical. There is a general feeling among the new student generation that, unlike Spanish, French cannot really be used for everyday communication in any part of the United States. In this perspective, it is still seen as a "foreign" language, spoken by "foreign" people who belong to "foreign" cultures and who live in "distant" places. In the minds of students, when compared to Spanish, French exists outside the borders of the United States, and one has to travel very far to find it. This perception is very explicit in Siskin, Knowles, and Davis' 1996 study that reveals that the usefulness of French is associated primarily with travel and study/residence abroad. Indeed, 98.04 percent of the students sampled indicated that French was useful for world travel (pp. 40-45). Additionally, their investigation showed that students attributed to French more "aesthetic" than instrumental qualities, as 98.04 percent of them mentioned that French was a beautiful language (p. 40). Finally, French was perceived to have some "transformative" functions, which the authors defined as "its role of agent of personal/ cultural enrichment or change" (p. 39).

In sum, there is abundant empirical evidence to inform teachers about the language preference of the new generation of students, and what these students hope their language skills can do for them. The current research unambiguously underscores the instrumental functions of language. Students are very pragmatic; they need their language training to be useful, as they prepare to enter a variety of careers. Most importantly, they emphasize the communicative goal of language study, asserting that they want to learn to communicate above all other goals (Guntermann, Hendrickson, and Urioste 1996:20). In fact, both Spanish and French students interviewed in this particular study rated literature far behind the other categories. This rating corroborates earlier findings. Martin and Laurie (1993), who investigated French students' views about the contribution of literary and cultural content to language learning, unequivocally state: "The questionnaire results appeared to support our initial hypothesis that foreign language students do not rate literary study very highly because they have reservations about its relative contribution to the four skills, and particularly oral proficiency" (p. 199). It is clear that students wish to be able to acquire a certain level of functional ability in the target language, and they believe that this ability will enhance their employment opportunities in the United States and abroad. In explicit terms, current research also suggests that students do not consider the study of literature necessary for increasing communicative proficiency. As Bernhardt (1997: 15) notes in her discussion of the "reinvention" of language departments and language programs, "the answer that, for example, students study French literature so that they might improve their knowledge of the French language and thus continue to use French is a rarity." In short, students seek language courses that can meet their practical goals and ultimately translate into higher earning potential, once on the job market.

Implications of These Choices

Such findings have significant implications for the study of French. It appears that the "aesthetic" and "transformative" qualities of French are not enough to outweigh the practical characteristics attributed to Spanish. In addition, the traditional view that equates the French language with "culture" and "civilization" and that makes knowledge of it a requirement for membership into the class of the "*personnes cultivées*" finds little appeal with the current student population.[2] Further, this elitist view does not fit well with current academic discourse, which rejects elitism and advocates multiculturalism and the inclusion of the "other," the one who might not appear to be "civilized" or "cultured," when viewed through the lens of this so-called classical ideology. The rejection of this particular point of view is implicit in current research. In their above-mentioned study conducted at the University of Oregon and at Brandeis University, Siskin, Knowles, and Davis asked students to list three words they associated with the French language (in addition to Spanish and Japanese). Spanish students found French "to be unappealing, associating it with such words as *arrogance, arrogant, elite, elitism, elitist, imperialism, rude, snob, snobbishness, snobby, snobs, snooty*" (1996:58). Additionally, these researchers go on to say that about one third of Spanish students and a quarter of French students perceived French-speaking people as "rude." At these particular institutions (and many others throughout the country), French appears to be cast "in an unflatteringly boastful or hegemonic posture" (p. 58). Needless to say, this image does not bode well for multicultural education or for the study of French.

Current trends mandate a totally new perspective and vision for the study of French. By perpetuating the image of French as an elite language to be learned by those who aspire to become *cultivés*, French might follow the same path of Latin and Greek, and eventually lose its place in the core curriculum. The frank and piercing words of Chaudenson (1993:403) in his discussion of *le français dans l'espace francophone* can serve as a warning to the present situation regarding the study of French in the United States:

> L'évolution des choses, faute d'une véritable "révolution francophone", se laisse facilement dessiner. Dans l'Europe de demain, face aux langues "mondiales" que sont l'anglais d'abord et, à un degré moindre, l'espagnol ou même le portugais, face à l'allemand, première langue européenne par le nombre des locuteurs..., le français ira jouer dans la cour des petits, avec les langues du Sud, l'italien et le grec, rêvant avec eux et comme eux à son glorieux passé.
>
> (The evolution of things, in the absence of a true "francophone revolution," can be easily sketched. In the Europe of tomorrow, confronted with the "world" languages that are, first of all English, and, to a lesser degree, Spanish or even Portuguese, confronted with German, the first European language in terms of the number of speakers..., French will end up playing in "the little league," with the languages of the South, Italian and Greek, dreaming with them and like them of its glorious past).

Without a real "revolution" in the French language studies curriculum, the future of French in the United States is in jeopardy, and it may well end up playing in the "little league." Very recently, a German colleague of mine commented with a note of satisfaction that in the Fall 1997 course catalogue at our university, there were exactly the same number of French and German I sections. While the gap between Spanish and French has widened, that between French and German has narrowed. Brod and Huber (1997: 55) note that German enrollment dropped by 27.8% between 1990 and 1995 compared to 24.6% for French during the same period. Those figures further suggest that the French crisis is real, and do not augur well for the future of French Studies. The time has, indeed, come to take a closer look at the curriculum and begin a "francophone revolution."

Toward a Francophone Revolution

New Standards in Foreign Language Education

The pressing need for reforms in foreign language teaching has certainly been recognized by the various professional organizations. Indeed, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), came together and drafted the *Standards for Foreign*

Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century (1996). The ability to *communicate* is at the heart of these standards. As stated in the document, "we must acquire the ability to understand and be understood in the language of the worldwide neighborhood" (p. 11). Foreign language education is defined in terms of five goal areas: *communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities*, which are referred to as the five C's; and "reaching the standards in the Communication Goal is central to the attainment of all the others" (p. 35). It is interesting to note that these standards are in keeping with students' views about foreign language study, according to which communication and the ability to relate or connect language to one's career are of paramount importance. It is unquestionable that these newly-developed standards recognize the need to equip students with the linguistic ability to forge connections across disciplines and acquire relevant information about their particular fields of interest, whether they are journalism, law, business, or medicine. Preparing competent students for a multilingual and multicultural America and for the various communities of the global village is the ultimate goal of education.

The AATF Response

The establishment of these standards constitutes a significant starting point toward defining what foreign language education ought to be, and helping students become multilingual and multicultural individuals. However, "this is only the beginning.... Standards have defined the agenda for the next decade—and beyond" (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project 1996:15). Consequently, it is incumbent upon language programs to ensure that these standards are met, and to adapt them to their specific languages.

With regard to the teaching of French, the American Association of Teachers of French in 1997 established a Student Task Force. Its charge is to formulate specific learning guidelines and standards for students of French from kindergarten through the senior year in college (K-16). The task force

> recognizes that language instruction cannot be limited to grammar and vocabulary or even to the development of language skills but must encourage creative language use and include the cultures of French-speaking peoples. Effective French instruction must extend to other subject matters, and even reach out to the communities at large, while inviting students to develop a greater appreciation of their native language and culture (AATF 1997:13).

Once again, the issues of language use (*communication*), the link with other disciplines (*connections*), a familiarity with francophone *cultures*, and an ability to function and work with "outside" *communities* resurface. AATF's mandate is very clear. French programs must meet the standards for foreign language learning, and "revolutionize" their curricula to ensure that the goals of foreign language education are achieved.

The Traditional French Curriculum and the Five C's

The French curriculum in many colleges and universities is still very traditional in the sense that it is literature-based. Once students complete their language instruction sequence, their only other choice, if they desire to continue their studies in French, is literature. In that category, they find quite an assortment of courses, ranging from medieval French literature to major contemporary French writers. They might also find a few other courses in culture and linguistics. However, generally speaking, the latter courses are not always considered part of the French major in the College of Arts and Sciences, but are accepted for those pursuing a French education degree through the College of Education. The striking paradox of the present curriculum is that an emphasis is placed precisely on what students seem to dislike the most, as can be recalled from Guntermann, Hendrickson, and Urioste's 1996 study (pp. 20-21). Therefore, it is not surprising that enrollment in French classes continues to drop so drastically since, after all, students do not seem to find what they are seeking, namely communication, functioning in social situations, and use of the French language in the world of work. In sum, the present system does not really provide students with ample opportunities to connect their French language skills with their prospective careers or with real communities.

Moreover, the French problem is further compounded by the fact that most colleges and universities do not have an across-the-board foreign language requirement that all students, regardless of major, must satisfy. In most instances, this requirement holds true for only the bulk of students who are majoring in disciplines within the College of Arts and Sciences (sometimes called College of Liberal Arts or College of Humanities/Letters and Sciences), or for those who are pursuing a degree in journalism. Those students are required to take a certain number of hours in a foreign language, ranging from twelve to fourteen, and they usually complete this requirement in three or four semesters. However, once this requirement is met, the possibility of reaching a higher level of instrumental and utilitarian proficiency is very slim since the upper-level courses are mostly in literature, the study of which is not perceived by students to lead to an increase in their communicative proficiency, as discussed earlier. Therefore, students opt not to continue their French language studies, since that they do not find doing so very practical. If the curriculum were more "student-oriented," one could legitimately contend that French would be a more attractive field of study.

It is also worth noting that the traditional format of the foreign language requirement, i.e., courses that meet five days a week for the entire duration of the semester, has also prevented students from other colleges, namely Engineering, Nursing, and Agriculture, from enrolling in foreign language classes. For example, at my own university, a task force was appointed to investigate the possibility of having a campus-wide foreign language requirement.[3] Various deans and program directors were surveyed. While recognizing the usefulness of an additional language, all of them pointed out that, given the current structure of the foreign language classes, it would be impossible to require their students to comply with this requirement without prolonging the amount of time necessary for them to complete their degrees in a timely fashion. Moreover, according to Bernhardt (1997: 16), a perception exists among colleagues in other academic areas that foreign language departments do not really provide the kind of language skills and courses they want for their students. "They want useful language abilities; they do not see the wisdom in learning language only for literary analysis. They see that goal as far too narrow and expensive." This perceived inflexibility on the part of foreign language departments tends to further support the claim that the curriculum is not student-oriented, but rather determined by faculty who seem to be out of sync with students' needs and concerns. Needless to say, such a mentality is not conducive to increasing the popularity of French programs. In fact, if maintained, it will definitely ensure the exclusion of French language studies from the core curriculum and its avoidance by the current student population.

In short, many existing French programs (or other language programs, for that matter) have not yet, in any measurable way, implemented the students' standards as defined by the profession. In the present context, effective French instruction needs to equip students with adequate communicative and cultural proficiency to meet their *career* aspirations. Additionally, it ought to extend to other subject matters and students of *all* disciplines. The field of French language studies and French faculty, in particular, cannot continue to remain insensitive to external societal pressures. Students and the public at large are advocating a language curriculum that focuses on practicality, pragmatism, and usefulness. To continue to be "blissfully ignorant," as we have historically been (Bernhardt 1997: 17), is to accelerate our own destruction. There is every indication that the field of French language studies needs to broaden its scope beyond traditional French literary analysis and provide richer curricular experiences to the constituencies that it purports to serve, that is, students. Indeed, it needs to redefine itself as the field of the Five C's.

Meeting the Challenge

The one-model-fits-all system that currently exists is outdated and should be replaced, since it fails to address the needs of the new student generation. The present curriculum at both the lower and upper levels has to be restructured to enable students to gain from their French courses some of the skills and knowledge they are seeking. At the lower level, a two-tier system can be offered: one for prospective French majors, that is, for students who aspire to achieve a more advanced level of communicative proficiency and are interested in gaining access to a body of knowledge in French; and the other for non-majors, that is, for students who just want to satisfy the foreign language requirement and gain a basic level of functional proficiency in the language, that relates to their chosen fields of study.

French for Majors. The existing lower-level sequence, which consists of approximately twelve to fourteen hours distributed over three or four semesters, is perhaps more suitable for this particular group of students than for non-majors.

However, it should be indicated that an approach emphasizing the communicative and functional aspects of language, as well as its sociolinguistic and cultural dimensions in authentic life situations, is strongly advocated for both groups since it responds to students' desires to reach a certain level of functional proficiency in the language. However, it is with regard to the upper-level courses that complete restructuring is necessary. Under the present system, a major in French really means a major in French literature. Once students complete their beginning and intermediate language sequence, they have no other choice but to take their upper-level courses in literature. In fact, these courses are currently required to complete the French degree. The fact that students do not find the *content* of such courses very useful for work purposes constitutes the crux of the problem, and contributes to the lack of popularity of the major. A French program that is student-oriented ought to be more flexible and diversify the content of its courses to make them appealing to the population that it serves. In light of current societal pressures, it makes little sense to continue offering such a large selection of courses in French literature at the expense of other areas that students find more attractive. Students certainly can benefit from additional courses in *contemporary* francophone cultures and societies, in addition to advanced classes in *French for specific purposes*, such as business, law, journalism, or medicine. For example, a course on *francophone communities in the United States* would certainly bring the French language closer to students and dispel the myth that French (unlike Spanish) is only spoken abroad. Moreover, an understanding of the cultural and linguistic perspectives of these communities, such as the Haitians or the francophone groups of Louisiana and New England, enhances the possibility of meaningful interactions with members of those communities in work and social situations. The same can be said of a course that focuses on *contemporary francophone African societies*, or one that explores the notion of *francophonie* (in its broadest sense) and cultural identity. Students who wish to join the Peace Corps or spend some time in these regions for work or research purposes would find such courses particularly useful. There is little doubt that students whose coursework in French includes courses in the above-mentioned areas are certainly better prepared to meet the demands of a competitive job market than those whose program of study focuses solely on literary analysis.

The proposed courses reflect the spirit of the new Standards for Foreign Language Learning which take into account that "it is difficult to imagine a job, a profession, a career, or a leisure activity in the twenty-first century which will not be enhanced by the ability to communicate efficiently and sensitively with others" (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project 1996: 12). The ability to communicate efficiently and sensitively with others can only be gained if students, through their language studies, are able to acquire some knowledge of these "others," and are offered the opportunity to link their language skills with *real* communities at home or abroad. Any French program that falls short of this particular goal will continue to experience severe enrollment decline, and will ultimately be doomed to extinction.

At this time, the dichotomy between literature-content courses and "other" content courses is meaningless and the debate over whether literature is a more rigorous field of inquiry than sociolinguistics, cultural and ethnic studies, or French for specific purposes is irrelevant. Enrollment patterns speak for themselves. In addition, the various studies undertaken to date unequivocally tell us why French is losing ground. Ignoring the compelling reality by maintaining an outdated and rigid curriculum will only perpetuate the perceptions that: 1. language and literature departments are not responsive to outside constituencies; 2. students in language and literature departments do not learn to use the language (Bernhart 1997: 16); and 3. language and literature departments do not really equip students with the skills they need to compete in the *real* world. As long as these perceptions exist, students will continue to avoid French courses to the great perplexity of French professors, who lament that nowadays students have no thirst for learning. A more realistic assessment of the situation is to admit that students want to acquire knowledge that they can *use* in their careers and lives, and for what *they* consider personal enrichment.

French for Non-majors. It is essential that the series of French courses for non-majors relate to their career aspirations, and enable them to carry out basic communicative functions in their prospective work environment and in social situations. It is for these particular students that connections with other disciplines (their own majors) become paramount. It is quite conceivable to offer a two-semester intensive sequence (12 hrs.) centered around the most popular careers, that can also be used to fulfill the foreign language requirement for those who prefer this option over the three- or four-semester sequence: French I and II for Health-related professions; French I and II for Business- related professions; and French I and II for Social Work-related professions.[4] Such options enable *all* students to take courses in French, as these courses are undoubtedly oriented toward their particular needs, and will give them a competitive edge on the job market. Students enrolling in these career-specific French courses are not attempting to reach a high level of proficiency in the French language; rather, most of them seek to enhance their chances for employment in their chosen fields by knowing the basic French lexical, idiomatic, and grammatical structures, as well as possessing basic intercultural skills, that can be useful in interactions with francophone speakers, or for gaining access to technical materials available in French. It is worth noting that the concept of such courses is not fundamentally different from the *French for reading knowledge* course offered for graduate students in other academic areas. For example, a student preparing for a career in nursing would probably find it very valuable to know several common medical terms that could later help him or her take care of a Haitian patient in Miami or New York. The same can be said for a student interested in law, particularly immigration law. Obviously, there is a real advantage to having a basic knowledge of the professional jargon in a foreign language; and students will certainly welcome every opportunity they have to acquire this information. Further, it is not unreasonable to think that outside colleagues might actually encourage their students to enhance their career opportunities by taking courses that are specifically tailored toward their professional needs and designed to equip them with useful language abilities.

The proposed curricular changes are intended to address students' and colleagues' concerns and to redress the "unflatteringly boastful and hegemonic" image that they have of our existing French programs. The public at large and the realities of global economies, cultural pluralism, and internationalism are mandating these changes. Therefore, it is imperative that we implement them. Our very existence depends on our ability to escape narrowness and embrace a pragmatic and multicultural perspective.

Actual Classroom Practices

The curricular framework outlined above has implications for actual classroom practices, and it is critical to relate those practices to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning established by the profession. We may recall that foreign language education/instruction revolves around five major goals: *communication*, *cultures*, *connections*, *comparisons*, and *communities* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project 1996). Generally speaking, *communication* refers to the ability to provide, exchange, and present information to others, as well as to understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics. *Cultures* deals with the ability to develop an awareness of other peoples' perspectives, way of life, patterns of behavior, and ways of representing those perspectives. *Connections* enables students to relate their language experiences to other disciplines, and use their knowledge of a foreign language to acquire new information about those disciplines. *Comparisons* allows students to gain insights into the nature of language and culture by comparing the language and culture studied with their own. Finally, *communities* seeks to extend language experiences beyond the classroom by providing students with the opportunity to use the language with actual members of the communities who speak the target language. It goes without saying that, in order to achieve these goals, French classroom practices need to be further enhanced by the incorporation of materials that genuinely represent the various francophone groups who speak the French language and by serious attempts to engage students in learning activities where their language skills can be put to concrete use.

The use of francophone films is perhaps one of the best ways to introduce students to a representative sample of francophone communities. The California Newsreel Project, *Library of African Cinema*, provides a rich selection of African and Caribbean videos that can be used in the classroom.[5] Exposing students, even in elementary French, to the richness of various francophone communities through visual representations is an effective vehicle for bringing the language alive by connecting it with *real* societies.[6] Indeed, they acquire some familiarity with the cultural perspectives of these groups, which can be extremely valuable to those who are contemplating a career that may require a great deal of social interaction with members of these communities. In addition to film, commercials and advertisements can also be used productively. In class, they enable students to see language use in culturally- and socially-authentic situations, and to acquire content and structure that they can relate to specific fields.[7] In short, the utilization of such materials in French language classes has unlimited potential and, most importantly, it addresses in a tangible and measurable way the five goals of foreign language education established in the *Standards*.

Furthermore, in order to relate French instruction to real communities, students must be encouraged to participate in activities that require them to use French outside the classroom. To this end, the concept of service learning becomes critical. Students are sent into the local community and asked to put their knowledge of the French language and francophone cultures to use in community service. For example, they can volunteer to prepare typical foods from various francophone countries for school cafeterias or local restaurants. They can also go to local high schools and help teachers with French-speaking students who do not yet have much functional ability in English. A few years ago, in my own community, there were several Rwandan students who enrolled in the public schools, just after their arrival from Africa. The presence of such students undoubtedly provides learners of French with a unique opportunity to practice their linguistic and cultural skills with *real* speakers in authentic situations. In addition to schools, local hospitals and state or city agencies are often in need of people who can interpret and translate information for French speakers. In those instances, the technical jargon students learn in their French for specific-purpose classes becomes very valuable, as they can already begin to utilize it in situations that relate to their prospective careers. In sum, there is a wide range of outside activities that can be tried out with students to enable them to put their language skills to concrete use. French language programs need to be more in touch with the community, and involve their students in community-based projects. By so doing, they demonstrate the practical applications of French language study, and address in a responsible manner the needs of the new student generation and society at large.

Conclusion

The pressing need for a francophone revolution is real. Several indicators, ranging from enrollment decline to new student characteristics and new trends in the profession, are compelling French language programs to change course. Our curricula must be restructured to meet the demands of multiculturalism, internalization, demographic shifts in the United States, and competitive job markets. Confronted with the pragmatic (or even materialistic) reality of the outside world, French language study can no longer remain the appanage of the so-called culturally-sophisticated elite. At a time when inclusion, equal opportunity, and social mobility are the prevailing principles, a decaying discourse on elitism is doomed to fall on deaf ears. In the present context, "Cultivating our garden" can only mean fertilizing our soil with communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.[8] Only when they find these key ingredients in their French courses, will students finally be able to say: "*Le français m'ouvre le monde.*"[9]

Notes

1. With regard to high school student perceptions, the evidence is more anecdotal. There are no recent publications that address this issue.
2. For a more detailed discussion of this elitist view, see Siskin, Knowles, and Davis (1996: 57-59); and Valdman (1996: 5-6).
3. I was a member of this Foreign Language Instruction *ad hoc* task force that was established in 1993-94.
4. This particular option might appear more practical in larger universities with larger teaching staff. However, smaller institutions could also explore ways to relate their French courses to professions.
5. Materials from California Newsreel can be ordered at the following address: 149 Ninth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103; phone: (415) 621-6196.
6. For more on the use of francophone videos in elementary French classes, see Zéphir (forthcoming).
7. A very useful session on the use of commercials, *La Publicité: voie d'accès à la langue et à la littérature*, was conducted at the 1997 AATF meeting in Nashville.
8. This is the translation of Valdman's (1995: 1) *Cultivons notre jardin*.
9. This is the title of a French promotion video produced by AATF.

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4

Accessing Cultural and Linguistic Input from Foreign Language Literary Texts in the Beginning Language Classroom

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In recent years, advocates for cultural studies such as Bernhardt (1991), Galloway (1992), and Scarcella and Oxford (1992) have called for an increased emphasis on the introduction of authentic foreign-language (FL) texts in early language instruction as valuable sources of FL input; such a call logically should include the use of FL literary texts. However, many textbooks that incorporate literature in a beginning FL program often utilize the literary passages only as vehicles for demonstrating or highlighting the use of specific vocabulary items or grammatical structures. (For examples of this tendency in Spanish, see Shook 1996 and 1997.) Although such a utilization of literary texts may prove beneficial to some FL students in some particular cases, might there be more of a rationale for providing beginning students access to FL literary texts? If so, how might instructors best provide such access to their students?

This paper provides FL instructors with the background information and the tools necessary to take advantage of the naturally-occurring linguistic and cultural input found in FL literary texts for the benefit of their early-stage learner-readers. First, this paper briefly reviews research regarding FL *literature*—its nature and its effects on FL learner-readers. Second, highlights of FL reading research in general are presented to provide evidence regarding the detriments and the benefits of the interaction between beginning FL students and FL literary texts. Finally, this paper provides a number of strategies designed to help students interact with a specific FL literary text, showing instructors how to identify and overcome potential obstacles, thereby taking advantage of the inherent linguistic and cultural input in the literary texts to contribute to the overall FL integration of their students.

Defining Foreign Language Literature

Within any culture, *literature* is a form of written language which contains linguistic *forms* that serve as the vehicle for the expression of *meaning* assigned by the author and his/her intended readership. These forms and meanings are not static; on the contrary, the use of certain linguistic forms to express certain meanings is arbitrary and adaptable within certain acceptable parameters, and this will change as the culture's systems of values change (Galloway 1995). Robson (1982) and Welleck (1982) are among the many who have attempted to identify the defining nature of literature within the field of literary criticism. Individually, both writers have come to the conclusion that the most defining component of literature is *how it is valued or judged by its readers*. Robson argues for the adoption of a more honorific rather than a more descriptive definition; he states the need for a definition "which commits its user to decisions about value and quality ... which picks out transcendence of originating contexts as a central characteristic ... which turn(s) on ideas of 'textuality'—linguistic adequacy, propriety, and excellence" (1982: 18). Welleck likewise stresses that literature cannot be defined simply in terms of functionality, imagination, language, or aesthetics; however, "literature does refer to reality, says something about the world, and makes us see and know the external world and that of our own and other minds" (1982: 30).

Similarly, Shook (1996) has put forth a definition of literature that highlights the readers' value judgment of literature as compared to all other sources of writing. Literature is that form of writing that *readers* characterize as more *compelling* than others "because it is evocative and emotive in both language and message; it is timeless; it is projective; it strikes at the heart of shared values and assumptions; it contains novelty; it is extraordinary; it evokes something almost indefinable in the reader; and it is memorable" (Shook 1996: 201). All of these definitions revolve around a central point: it is not the use of literary devices (rhyme, metaphor, author's voice, etc.) that sets literature apart, but rather it is the *reader* who determines which written texts are literature, specifically, when the readers of literary works are compelled to reflect inwardly about the cultural values and assumptions expressed within the texts.

Because of their definition as FL learners, we see that beginning readers of a FL literary text are dealing with two linguistic systems: their native language (the *L1*), which most have mastered—some to a greater extent than others—, and their developing Spanish-language system (the *L2*). In addition, also because of their definition as beginning FL learners, they probably do not share many or all of the common cultural experiences and information shared by members of the foreign culture under study. Therefore, these readers are dealing with (minimally) two sets of cultural experiences: their native cultural experience, with all the values and assumptions related therein (the *C1*) and the cultural experiences related in the FL literary passage, with all the related values and assumptions (the *C2*). Because literature embodies both the language and experiences of the culture in which it was written, we as teachers are likely to find that despite some overlap between the L1/

C1 and the L2/C2, there will be significant gaps in the students' C2 knowledge and those C2 values and norms assumed by the literary text, as well as limited L2 knowledge.

Foreign Language Reading Research

In the arena of FL learning research, *input* traditionally has been defined as being made up of all the language to which the learner is exposed, including both oral (such as in conversations with native speakers or FL teachers in the L2) and written (L2 print material, signage, etc.). Cognitive scientists long have viewed human beings as processors of the information they receive from their environment; however, we have a limited capacity for processing that information, due to factors such as our experience with the information and the task(s) at hand. By definition, FL learners cannot process all of the FL input to which they are exposed at one time; this limited capacity is caused by the new, unfamiliar language input to which they are being exposed and the difficult task of using that input to communicate. (See, for example, McLaughlin, Rossman, and McLeod 1983; Anderson 1985.)

Bernhardt (1991) states that although many researchers have investigated various aspects of the interaction between the learner-reader and the FL text, few concrete generalizations that effectively characterize this interaction have been established (67-68). This paucity of concrete generalizations is due to the lack of detailed information regarding the readers themselves and the reading tasks in which they participated, as related by the researchers. However, a few consistent findings from FL reading research and their related implications can be highlighted:

> *The speed of FL reading is often dependent on graphemic familiarity.*
> Beginning readers who encounter an L2 writing system similar to their own (for example, native-English speakers reading Spanish or French) often will be faster readers than those who encounter a different L2 writing system (i.e., native-English speakers reading Russian or Korean; native-Korean speakers reading Spanish). FL instructors with students from different native-language backgrounds might find it necessary to adapt reading tasks in order to take into account those differences.
>
> *Background knowledge is important in reading comprehension, but the manner in which such knowledge is accessed and assessed may hinder comprehension.*
> Learner-readers make assumptions about what they are reading based on what they already know: their personal knowledge, their knowledge of the world, and even their developing L2/C2 knowledge. FL instructors should try to take advantage of the background knowledge of their beginning FL learner-readers in order to aid understanding of the FL texts; however, sometimes the use of students' background knowledge can lead to further linguistic and cultural misunderstandings.

Difficult syntax may inhibit comprehension, but simplified syntax may not necessarily equate with simplified meaning. While some language structures may cause difficulties for beginning FL learner-readers, especially structures that are completely without equivalent in the learners' L1, those difficult structures often have meaning attached to them; thus, their removal might make the written input even harder to process. Instructors should try to use authentic FL texts as much as possible; when comprehension enhancement is necessary, adapting the reading task at hand is preferable to editing the text.

The acquisition of reading skills is developmental and may transfer from the L1, but the L1 skills may also interfere in the comprehension process. Students who are good L1 readers tend to be good L2 readers; yet the manner in which they are accustomed to reading in their native language may not correspond to the logic or argumentation patterns customary to L2 authors. Therefore, FL instructors need to introduce their students to and orient their students' reading towards the type of reading passage at hand.

While cloze testing and miscue analysis have been popular measures of reading comprehension, questions regarding the validity of these procedures for reading comprehension assessment have been brought to light. Any one task that FL instructors might utilize to determine their students' comprehension of a FL reading passage might not give complete information regarding what the students did indeed comprehend. The use of multiple tasks for reading comprehension assessment of the same text is highly recommended.

It is clear from the above research findings that FL learners indeed must be considered limited-capacity processors of the L2 linguistic written input that they encounter. Their familiarity/unfamiliarity with the L2 vocabulary and grammar in the input and the background knowledge they bring to the reading task by nature will affect their comprehension of the linguistic structures; additionally, the manner in which the learner-reader is led to approach the text might affect the degree to which the learner successfully processes the new linguistic forms and their associated meanings in the reading passage.

Among all of the FL reading research, only two published empirical studies specifically examined the interaction between FL readers and literary texts. Bernhardt (1986) examined the reconstructions of literary texts built by second-year college-level learners of German. She found that the initial decisions made by the readers regarding which portions of a German literary text to process, what meaning to assign to specific linguistic features of the text, and whether or not to apply story structure schema to the texts, primarily were determined by the learner-readers' background knowledge. In other words, *the FL learner-readers' lack of shared background knowledge with the culture of the German texts' authors and* *original targeted readers* caused a "mismatch" between a FL learner-reader and a FL literary work. With this conclusion, Bernhardt states that this obliges "the instructor . . . (to) uncover the model built by the student and . . . modify the reconstruction if necessary. . . . Rather than imposing his or her own model, the teacher should become an active participant in constructing meaning with the students. Such a procedure increases student involvement with literature but, more importantly, creates a model of (FL) literate behavior" (1986: 41).

Riley (1993) investigated the effects of discourse structure on comprehension of short stories with early and intermediate, college-level FL students of French. She randomly assigned subjects to read one of three different structures of the same short story (a chronological, a flashback, or a "story grammar" violation structure), and assessed comprehension by a reading recall in English. Riley found that when the French short story met an expected, *culturally-familiar story structure* (the chronological structure), the FL learner-readers comprehended more. Such a result implies that FL students approach FL literary texts with a set of expectations and experiences based on their own native culture. Riley concludes that "story structure should be a factor that influences the choice of literary texts presented in the L2 (foreign language) classroom. . . . Capitalizing on the knowledge that students possess about the structure of stories, teachers can choose texts that are more accessible to L2 readers at all levels" (1993: 426).

In short, these two studies suggest that FL learner-readers' processing of both unique linguistic information and unique cultural information found in FL literary texts is influenced to a great extent by their own culturally-dependent values, assumptions, norms, and variations--in other words, their *C1*--as well as their experience with the L2.

Obviously, beginning FL learner-readers do not share a FL author's language and cultural background to the extent that they *alone* can fully comprehend the author's message or fully appreciate its expression. Previously it was stated that FL learners are by nature limited in their capacity to process the language input to which they are exposed *because of their limited experience with the input and the task demands with which they are faced.* Since beginning FL readers have *very little experience* with the L2/C2 as expressed in FL literary texts, problems in processing the input should be expected; therefore, it is imperative that FL instructors orient the *tasks* for reading literary texts towards dealing specifically with the integration of the learners' C1/L2 knowledge with the C2/L2 knowledge assumed by the text; doing so should lessen the demands placed on the learner-reader, thereby improving their processing of the cultural and linguistic input naturally contained in a FL literary text.

Tasks to Access FL Cultural and Linguistic Input

The different processes by which a reader attempts to create meaning from written input have been labeled *reading strategies.* While many different reading strategies (i.e., orienting, skimming, scanning, word-guessing) and their related tasks (such as making lists, using context to define unfamiliar vocabulary, making use of accompanying pictures and titles, among others) have been proposed through the years, the effectiveness of the tasks is strengthened when they are organized together in a logical plan to guide the reader through the reading process. The word *strategy* normally implies "a plan/maneuver/technique to accomplish a goal"; hence, this author advocates the use of the term *strategic orientation* when dealing with reading task design in order to indicate that the tasks have been designed to link together with the thought of accomplishing a specific reading goal.

In general, strategic reading tasks are separated into *prereading, reading,* and *postreading tasks*, according to their sequence in the reading process:

> *Prereading tasks* enable the reader to activate the appropriate formal and content schemata, that is, the linguistic and cultural background knowledge the reader already possesses, before interacting with the text as a whole.
>
> *Reading tasks* are designed to enhance text comprehension as the reader delves into the text by building from the activated C1 background knowledge and having the reader interact with macro- and microtext structure (layout, rhetorical structure, semantic and syntactic structures, etc.).
>
> *Postreading tasks* provide opportunities for the reader to confirm prior predictions regarding the text and comprehension, to integrate/incorporate the new textual information into the reader's knowledge, and serve as a springboard into other language-learning activities.

Clearly, the first step in preparing tasks for a reading assignment requires that the instructor attempt to identify any possible C1-C2 mismatch(es) that the students might experience upon reading a FL text. Next, a progression of appropriate prereading, reading, and postreading tasks needs to be designed to help the students overcome their limited capacity for processing the unique L2/ C2 features of the text and help the instructor assess overall reading comprehension.

Example

Shook (1996) examined a large number of beginning Spanish textbooks in order to gauge the use of literary texts in each. One of those textbooks, *Dos Mundos*, contained some literary selections; however, Shook concluded that none of those literary texts had been designed to overcome in a realistic manner any potential C1-C2 mismatches between beginning Spanish students and those particular literary texts. In order to demonstrate a strategic orientation for reading task design appropriate for beginning FL students, this paper now presents such a design for one of the literary selections in *Dos Mundos*, "Palatitas de Guayaba." (The text in its original form, as well as an English translation, is found in Appendix A.)

The first step is to identify any possible mismatches between this particular group of learner-readers and this particular literary text. The authors of the textbook in which this selection occurred chose the text as a vehicle for demonstrating the use of medical terminology and the use of the preterit and imperfect in Spanish. For

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this author, however, "Palatitas" clearly relates some overriding Hispanic assumptions and values regarding *la muerte*, death, within the various Hispanic cultures.

For many of our Anglo-American beginning Spanish students, "death" seems to be a somewhat taboo topic, one that is not openly discussed, especially in school. These students tend to relate "death" to the ideas of "ghosts" and "something to be avoided at all costs"; someone who dies has been "lost". Additionally, the culture of medicine in their culture often deems that when one is dying in the hospital, all attempts possible must be made to "save" the dying person. However, in the Hispanic cultures, "la muerte" seems to be accepted as an everyday occurrence; hence it is not a taboo topic. Those who have passed on are thought of as "spirits of family and friends"; death is seen as an "accepted eventuality"; and finally, in many parts of the Hispanic world, death is viewed as a "release" from the trials and tribulations of this earthly life. Hispanic traditions dictate that when faced with dying in a hospital, the "dignity" of dying must be preserved. In short, then, the overall C1-C2 mismatch this author has identified for beginning Spanish students set to read "Palatitas" is that students need to understand that in this Spanish-language literary passage, the main characterization of "death" is that dying should be a *sad, yet dignified event*, not necessarily *tragic* one.

Now that a possible mismatch has been identified, the FL instructor needs to design a progression of reading tasks in order to help the students interact with the literary text in order to comprehend the information it contains, while at the same time overcoming this possible C1-C2 mismatch. It is obvious from the reading comprehension activities that accompanied "Palatitas" in the original textbook that no possible mismatches were pointed out for the beginning Spanish students. (The original tasks, as well as an English translation of those tasks, are presented in Appendix B.) All of the original tasks are postreading tasks--there are no attempts to activate previous knowledge through prereading tasks, nor are the readers given any help in interacting with the text form and meaning relationships in reading tasks. The "Comprensión" activities seem to be asking the students to retell the major events of the story; in light of the chapter material, this task is clearly to get the students to work with the preterit/imperfect and text vocabulary. The "Ahora ... ¡usted!" tasks also seem problematic for beginning learner-readers of Spanish. Asking students to relate their opinions about a topic such as euthanasia seems to this author to be a very high-order language skill, a very difficult task for first-year language learners. The second task related to past hospitalizations seems relevant to this topic; however, asking students to express themselves on only *one* of those topics might prove sufficient in most cases. Finally, the "Un paso más..." activity is a good example of a typical postreading task. However, in its original context, it is not as effective as it could be, if given the proper prereading and reading tasks to allow the students to really integrate the text input for further language use. In order to demonstrate better an effective strategic orientation for reading "Palatitas", this author linked together a series of reading tasks, all of which appear in Appendix C.

The prereading tasks orient the students to reading a literary selection (as opposed to a different from of written input), activate the theme of the cultural significance of death, and activate familiar L2, all *before* the learner-readers interact with the literary passage itself. The prereading tasks in Appendix B require the students to reflect about literary texts in general and about how death is viewed through word and illustration in their own culture. Additionally, the tasks lead the students to relate this particular passage to other familiar sources of cultural reflections of the theme of "death." Finally, the students are asked to review vocabulary in Spanish which they have studied previously, and which might appear in the literary passage to be read.

The reading tasks allow learner-readers to interact efficiently and successfully with the L2/C2 input by building from their activated L2/C1 knowledge and encountering the L2 and C2 information within its natural context. The reading tasks in Appendix B start with the students' activated knowledge regarding how death is represented in their own culture (in literature and other media) and familiar medical terminology in Spanish. Then the tasks guide the students to come to understanding of what is happening in the text (i.e., "What is the story here?") while at the same time highlighting the use of the preterit and imperfect in story telling. Finally, the last set of reading tasks lead the students to identify the tone/perspective expressed by the author regarding the story events.

Finally, the postreading tasks require the learners to demonstrate that they have processed the L2/C2 textual information and that they indeed are able to use this new information in ways that will further develop their L2/C2 knowledge. Via the postreading tasks in Appendix B, both instructors and students should be able to confirm and reinforce the readers' successful processing of the literary input. The tasks presented allow the students to show that they accessed the C2 input presented. In addition, students will be able to use those ideas and the related L2 vocabulary and grammar in language learning situations beyond those specific to the L2 literary passage.

Conclusion

In sum, *FL reading* implies that the readers will be interacting not only with the text by attending to words, phrases, and paragraphs of the text, but also by accessing, building, and confirming/rejecting frameworks of expectations. Confronted with a FL literary text, beginning FL students naturally lack the assumed C2 knowledge shared by the author and his/her intended readership; C1-C2 mismatches may result in potential linguistic and cultural misunderstandings when the reader faces them alone. Therefore, FL instructors need to make use of strategy-based reading tasks such as those presented here to guide the beginning students through any possible C1-C2 mismatches that might occur. Such tasks enable the readers to interact successfully with the particular literary work by accessing and comprehending more of the linguistic and cultural input naturally found in literature than the readers could do alone.

Three additional comments need to be made at this time. First of all, this paper does not pretend to assume that beginning FL students are ready to take on extensive reading of FL literature, such as full-length novels, from the outset. However, fragments of certain literary works, shorter stories or legends, and some poems might prove appropriate sources of written input for beginning learner-readers. Shook (1996) shows how some current beginning Spanish textbooks have approached the use of literature (appropriately or not) in their materials. Secondly, neither should the assumption be made from this paper that other, nonliterary types of written input might not serve FL instructors and learner-readers just as well as a particular literary work. Any type of authentic written input might be utilized for the instructor's purpose; however, a strategic orientation to the reading task design still is paramount. Finally, it should not be assumed that the use of one literary work in particular will serve to convey all of the pertinent information regarding one or a number of cultural constructs. The case should be made for just the opposite: It is only through the repeated exposure to L2 and C2 input, whether oral input, visual input, or written input (both literary and non-literary) in conjunction with FL instructors making certain precautions and preparations in order to identify possible C1-C2 mismatches and to help their learner-readers overcome those possible mismatches, that beginning FL learners truly will begin to incorporate such L2/C2 input into their growing repertoire of knowledge of and abilities in the foreign language.

It is hoped that this paper will provide useful and thought-provoking information for FL instructors who currently use or plan to use literature in their beginning classes. Literature can expose students to creative uses of language as well as insights and nuances into the C2; however, these very advantages of FL literature with might be problematic for beginning learner readers because of possible C1-C2 mismatches between the learner and the literary text. Such mismatches can be offset by the instructors' adoption of a strategic orientation to reading task design in order to allow the learners to access and process the rich linguistic and cultural input inherent in foreign language literature.

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Appendix A

"Palatitas de Guayaba"[1] (Fragmento) por Erlinda González-Berry

Pues mi abuelita murió el año pasado. Ay Sergio, fue la cosa más horrible y deshumanizante que jamás podrás imaginar. Después de hacerle una operación, la conectaron a un montón de[2] máquinas. Estuvo así durante diez días con tubitos en la boca, en la nariz y por donde quiera.[3] La piel la tenía amarilla y llena de moretones.[4] Nunca abrió los ojos y nunca supimos si estaba consciente o no, y las malditas máquinas[5] forzándola a respirar. Mami y Papi se pusieron muy mal, pues ya te puedes imaginar viéndola así. Papi peor porque a él le había quedado la decisión de si hacerle la operación o no. Si no se la hubieran hecho, habría muerto a las pocas horas,[6] pero al hacérsela siguió viviendo en ese infierno mecánico[7] y claro, él se sentía culpable.[8]

La décima noche entré con mi hermana [Luz], la que hace tiempo se metió a una religión aleluya* o qué sé yo.[9] No me lo vas a creer pero cada aspecto de su vida está ligado[10] a su religión. Antes de entrar habíamos estado hablando y todas habíamos quedado de acuerdo[11] en que era absurdo que la tuvieran viva a pura fuerza de las máquinas. Que lo que merecía[12] era morir con dignidad en su casita. Los médicos, olvídate, "que es nuestra responsabilidad moral tenerla así mientras sigan funcionando tres órganos vitales" y quién sabe cuántas más pendejadas[13] nos decían. Pues esa noche eran como las once cuando entramos a darle una vuelta[14] como habíamos hecho durante diez días. Como era la primera vez que entraba con Luz, me quedé sorprendida cuando empezó a hablarle [a la abuelita]. Los demás de la familia no decían nada; nomás[15] se quedaban allí mirándola llorando y todo lo demás. Pero Luz de una vez se puso a hablarle como si nada.[16] Le decía que Dios la esperaba con los brazos abiertos, que ya era tiempo que le diera su alma,[17] que

no se resistiera a su voluntad,[18] que el cielo era bellísimo, que había jardines y huertas[19] por todos lados, que el abuelito la esperaba en el cielo y no sé cuánto más. Y la abuelita seguía como siempre, inerte,[20] sin dar señas[21] de oír o de comprender nada. Pero, sabes, de pronto empezó a ocurrir la cosa más rara. A medida que mi hermana le hablaba, acariciándole[22] siempre la frente, empezaron a cambiar los números en la máquina que le registraba el pulso. Cuando entramos estaba a 140. Poco a poco empezó a bajar: 135—134—133—130. A medida que le bajaba el pulso a mí se me aceleraba y se me hacía difícil respirar. Pues, fíjate que jamás había visto a nadie morir y se me hacía[23] que allí a mi ladito estaba la calaca,** tú sabes, personificada y todo eso. Cuando por fin marcó 94 la máquina, se detuvo, pero seguía el siseo[24] de la respiradora. Pronto entró la enfermera a decirnos que era tiempo de salir. Salimos al corredor, Luz la misma estampa de la serenidad,[25] yo totalmente histérica. Ella me abrazó e inmediatamente sentí una ola[26] de calma extenderse a través de mi cuerpo. Así estábamos abrazadas cuando salió la enfermera a decirnos que había muerto la abuelita.

[1]Paletitas... *Guava popsicles* [2]un... muchas [3]por... *everywhere* [4]*bruises*
[5]malditas... *damned machines* [6]a... *within a few hours* [7]infierno... *mechanized hell* [8]*guilty* [9]qué... *something like that* [10]relacionado [11]habíamos... *had agreed*
[12]*deserved* [13]*stupidities (col.)* [14]darle... *check on her* [15]solamente *(Mex.)*
[16]como... *as if nothing were wrong* [17]le... *she give him her soul* [18]*will* [19]*orchards*
[20]paralizada [21]*signs* [22]*caressing* [23]se... yo pensaba *(Mex.)* [24]*hissing* [25]la... *the very picture of calm* [26]*wave*

*La palabra **aleluya** normalmente se usa para referirse a cualquier religión cristiana no católica, especialmente las religiones protestantes.
La **calaca es una figura del folklore mexicano comparable al *Grim Reaper*; otro nombre para la muerte (*death*).

Note: The author gratefully acknowledges the permission given by the author, Erlinda González-Berry, to reproduce this text in his arrticle.

"Guava lollipops" (Excerpt) by Erlinda González-Berry
(English translation by Shook)

Well, my grandmother died last year. Oh, Sergio, it was the most horrible and dehumanizing thing that you could ever imagine. After doing the operation, they connected her to a ton of machines. For ten days she was that way, with tubes in the mouth, in the nose, and just everywhere. Her skin was yellow and bruised. She never opened her eyes, and we never found out if she was conscious or not—the damned machines were forcing her to breathe. Mami and Papi were really bad; you can imagine seeing her in that way. Papi was the worst because it was he who had to decided whether to do the operation or not. If they hadn't done it, she would have died within a few hours, but by doing it she continued living in that mechanized hell, and of course he felt guilty.

On the tenth night I went in with my sister [Luz], who had some time back had joined one of those "alleluia" religions or something like that. You won't believe me, but every aspect of her life is tied to her religion. Before entering, we had been talking, and we had all agreed that it was absurd that it was only the pure force of the machines keeping her alive. What she deserved was to die with dignity in her own home. The doctors, forget it! kept telling us: "It's our moral responsibility to keep her this way as long as three vital organs still function" and who knows how many other stupidities. So that night it was about eleven when we went in to check on her as we had done for the last ten hours. Since it was the first time that I had gone in with Luz, it surprised me when she began to talk to her (the grandmother). The rest of the family didn't say a thing; they only stood there looking at her, crying and the lot. But Luz immediately began to talk to her as if nothing were wrong. She told her that God was waiting for her with open arms, that it was now the time to give him her soul, that she shouldn't resist his will, that heaven was beautiful, that there were gardens and orchards everywhere, that Grandfather was waiting for her in heaven, and so forth. And my grandmother continued on as always, paralyzed, without signs of hearing or comprehending anything. But you know, suddenly, the strangest thing started to occur. While my sister was speaking to her, caressing her forehead, the numbers on the machine registering her pulse began to change. When we came in, it was at 140. Little by little it began to drop: 135—134—133—130. As her pulse was dropping, mine began speeding up and I was finding it difficult to breath. Well, of course, it was the first time that I had seen anyone die, and I thought that there next to me was the Grim Reaper, you know, in person. When the machine finally hit 94, it stopped, but the hissing of the respirator continued. Soon the nurse came in and told us that it was time to leave. We went into the corridor: Luz, the very picture of calm, and I totally hysterical. She hugged me and immediately I felt a wave of calm extending itself throughout my body. We were still there hugging when the nurse came out to tell us that Grandmother had died.

Appendix B
Original reading comprehension tasks for "Palatitas de Guayaba"

Comprensión

Imagínase que va a contarle esta historia a un amigo (una amiga). Narre con sus propias palabras lo que ocurrió, utilizando los siguientes pasos como guía.

Primer párrafo: 1. la decisión que tuvo que tomar el padre 2. la operación y el estado de la abuela 3. los sentimientos de la familia

Segundo párrafo: 1. descripción de la hermana Luz 2. las acciones de Luz 3. resultado de las acciones de Luz

Ahora . . . ¡usted!

1. ¿Qué opina usted de la eutanasia? Si una persona está viviendo gracias a las máquinas, ¿piensa que es mejor dejarla vivir o desconectar las máquinas? ¿Por qué? Explique.

2. ¿Ha sido usted hospitalizado/a alguna vez? ¿Ha tenido a un pariente o amigo/a en el hospital? En ambos casos, ¿fue por una operación? ¿Un accidente? ¿Una enfermedad? Explique.

Un paso más . . .
Piense en una persona que usted quiere mucho—amigo/a, novio/a, pariente—y cuéntele una experiencia que usted tuvo el año pasado. ¿Es un recuerdo triste? ¿Feliz? Empiece con las palabras de esta historia: Pues, el año pasado... (*evento*). Ay, (*nombre*), fue....

Note: The preceding exercises are reproduced by permission of McGraw Hill and can be found in Terrell et. al (1994): p.365.

(English translation by Shook)
Comprehension
Imagine that you are going to tell this story to a friend. In your own words, tell what happened, using the following events as guides.
First paragraph: 1. the decision that the father had to make 2. the operation and the status of the grandmother 3. the family's feelings
Second paragraph: 1. description of Luz, the sister 2. Luz's actions 3. result of Luz's actions

Now . . . you!

1. What do you think about euthanasia? If a person is living only by means of machines, do you think it is best to let him/her live or disconnect the machines? Why? Explain.
2. Have you ever been hospitalized? Have you had a relative or friend in the hospital? In both cases, was it for an operation? An accident? An illness? Explain.

One more step . . .
Think about a person whom you love a lot—friend, boyfriend/girlfriend, relative—and tell him/her something that happened to you last year. Is it a sad memory? Happy? Begin with the words of the story:
Well, last year (*event*). Oh, (*name*), it was...

Appendix C
Examples of strategic tasks for reading "Palatitas de Guayaba"

I. PREREADING TASKS

Orienting task: You are going to read a literary text in Spanish that deals with the death of a family member. If this theme bothers you too much to participate, please advise your instructor before we begin, and you will be given another task to complete. Take a moment to list the different types of literary texts that you have read in your native language. Think about what common elements those texts had in common; make a list of those elements, also.

Brainstorming task: What words/phrases/figures are found frequently in your culture relating to descriptions of the death of a family member? Make a list of them. Then, share that list with others in the class: which (if any) do all share? Which differ by culture?

Associating tasks: (a) Examine the reading passage, and identify the type of literary text that this seems to be. What similar types of texts are you familiar with that treat a similar theme in your culture?
(b) In groups of two, try to predict what literary elements from the first activity might be present in this text.
(c) What other non-literary works (plays, movies, art) have you seen that treat a similar theme?

Categorizing task: Examine the following vocabulary list. Determine which of the words/phrases are used only in *medical* situations in Spanish, or whether they might have other uses also. Write a sentence in Spanish for each which demonstrates the use of the words.

operación	máquina	tubos	respirar	morir	órgano
(operation)	(machine)	(tubes)	(to breathe)	(to die)	(organ)
doctor	piel	resistir	frente	enfermera	cuerpo
(doctor)	(skin)	(to resist)	(forehead)	(nurse)	(body)

II. READING TASKS

As you read, remember that it is not necessary to completely understand each and every word you come across. Look for clues to meaning within the passage surround any unfamiliar words. Examine the tasks below in order to identify what information you are responsible for obtaining, then read all the way through once before attempting to complete any of the tasks.

Questioning task: As you read or complete the other exercises, jot down any questions that you might have regarding the attitudes and/or customs of the people in the reading passage. If you come upon the answer to your questions, note those answers. If at the end of all these activities some questions remain, you may ask them to your classmates and/or instructor.

Predicting/Confirming tasks: (a) What literary elements from the list that you made earlier did you find in the passage? (b) Did you notice any new medical usage of the words/phrases from above in the passage?

Organizing tasks: (a) Circle those words in the text that indicate the sequence of events the night the grandmother died. (b) Underline those phrases that relate descriptions of the grandmother's physical state in the passage.

Analyzing tasks: Fill out the following chart with the appropriate words/phrases from the passage and which character in the passage uses those words/phrases.

	Positive	Person(s)	Negative	Person(s)
Words/phrases indicating attitudes towards the hospital and the medical efforts made there.				
Words/phrases indicating attitudes towards death				

III. POSTREADING TASKS

Determining significance task: Identify the following statements to indicate who is *most likely* to hold this opinion: a Hispanic from a Hispanic country, a person from the U.S., or someone from either culture.

1. "Es mejor que los viejos mueran en casa, rodeados por los parientes." ("It's best that the elderly die at home, surrounded by their family."
2. "Necesitamos usar todos los esfuerzos posibles para salvar a los que sufren de enfermedades graves y mortales." ("We need to use all efforts possible to save those dying of deadly illnesses.")
3. "Tengo miedo de la muerte." ("I'm afraid of dying.")
4. "Cuando murió mi abuelo fue como perdí a mi mejor amigo." ("When my grandfather died, it was like I lost my best friend.")
5. "Descanse en paz." ("Rest in peace.")

Summarizing tasks: (a) Describe an experience that you had when you, a family member, or a close friend became sick or was hospitalized, or when someone close died. In a paragraph of about four sentences, write what happened to you or the other person and how your/their family and friends reacted in that situation. (b) In groups of 4-5, share the experience that you wrote about. Do you find any common experiences and or reactions? (c) Would the situations you described have been different if they had occurred in a Hispanic culture? In the group, come up with examples to explain the differences of lack of differences.

5

Personalizing Foreign Language Instruction with World Wide Web Home Pages

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If one were to describe the history of foreign language teaching in the United States over the last 25 years in one short paragraph, one would stress the teaching of language for communication using techniques that personalize instruction. This emphasis on communication has been characterized by efforts to increase student proficiency through interacting in specific situations and by reading authentic texts. Finally, an increased emphasis on culture as an integral part of coursework is helping students meet national standards.[1]

While each of these trends has had its proponents and opponents,[2] the profession has coped well, and changes for our students have been beneficial. Fortunately for teachers, many of the activities we have found successful over the years can help students meet new goals. After all, different methods call on a limited number of activities, reordering them to meet priorities (Omaggio Hadley 1993:78).

One new source of activities that can be applied to all these perspectives is the World Wide Web. The Web (WWW) is a complex system of computers all over the world linked together in order to allow computer users who have access through a service provider and software called a "browser" to view electronic documents ("hypertext") created by others (Green 1997). When these documents are written in the languages we teach and represent target cultures, they become useful, important, and fascinating pedagogical realia.

Web documents have features that correspond to many of the goals we have established over the years. Indeed, many scholars have begun applying the WWW to classroom activities.[3] Such an application is possible because Web documents fit in with all major currents. As both reflections of a culture and a provider of cultural content, Web sites will be useful in meeting the national standards for foreign language learning (Walz 1998). As documents written by native speakers at least in part for other native speakers, they are authentic (see Galloway 1992; García 1991; Peacock 1997; Sisken and Davis 1996; Steele and Suozzo 1994:87-100) and important to the proficiency movement because they represent natural language accurately (e.g. Omaggio Hadley 1993:82-83). They especially promote communicative language teaching, with its emphasis on personalization, since the learner can read in detail about people who actually exist and, in some cases, communicate with them (Carrier 1997; see below). While many applications of the WWW to foreign language teaching have involved news and information sites with an emphasis on fact gathering (e.g. Abrate 1997; Carrier 1997; Finneman 1996; Higgins 1996, Lafford and Lafford 1997; Lee 1997; Warschauer 1995), this article will examine personal home pages on the WWW as a source for authentic reading documents. Examples will come from French, with suggestions for applying the same techniques to Spanish and German.

A personal home page is an electronic self-portrait. The creator talks about himself/herself and reveals whatever information s/he deems appropriate.[4] Typical pages include the current status of the subject (often a student or an employee of a technology company), his/her family, interests, photographs, links to friends' pages, favorite links, and an e-mail address. Foreign language textbooks have often tried to present personal information, even before Omaggio demonstrated that personalization in verbal interaction in the classroom has positive benefits (1982). For example, high school textbooks of French present brief autobiographies of individuals (e.g. Valette and Valette 1985:86-87) or entire families (Valdman et al. 1993:78). College textbooks do the same (e.g. Valette and Valette 1993:20), but the student reader will conclude that these people most likely do not exist. Even if they do, the information is sketchy, and the language not always authentic.

Personal home pages on the WWW present real people in all the detail they choose. The language is authentic and up-to-date. In fact, the immediacy of Web pages is one of their most attractive characteristics. In researching this topic, I found one Web page that had been updated the same day I was reading it. As with any authentic document, the pedagogical applications are almost unlimited; the teacher simply modifies the tasks required to the proficiency level of the students (Grellet 1981:7-8). Since individuals of all ages write home pages, students will find someone with whom they can identify. Using search engines properly (see below), students will be able to find the Web pages of people who share their interests. In short, Web sites in general and personal home pages in particular provide an excellent source of texts for teaching foreign languages.

Getting Started

Fidelman (1996), Green (1997), Lafford and Lafford (1997), and Walz (1997) describe procedures for getting started on the WWW. Teachers who do not yet have access in schools will have to send students to libraries and the homes of students who do, making the Web an optional activity by necessity, at least on the K-12 level. President Clinton has promised to have all schools connected by the year 2000 (Ciabattari 1997).

If possible, students should have a computer wired directly to a server for faster transmission time (Williams 1995). Henricks (1997) describes the basic service providers and gives Web links that permit national searches for local hosts. The user's computer will need a browser, which is almost always Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer. New Web users may want to consider calling up a "launch" site to become familiar with the possibilities. A launch site is one that groups together as many sites with one theme as possible on one page, allowing the user to click on any site and to switch to it immediately. A large group of launch sites for the study of French is located at URL #1 in the Appendix. (The URL, or Uniform Resource Locator, is the address of the Web site; all URLs mentioned in this article are listed in order in the Appendix).

Searching for Personal Home Pages

To find personal home pages (or any other site for that matter), one can consult directories and search engines, a distinction made by Tweney (1996:184). Directories group vast numbers of sites by categories; the best known is *Yahoo!*. After calling up the site (URL #2), one clicks on the category "Entertainment," then "People," which at this writing gave over 80,000 links to home pages. Unfortunately, virtually all of the pages are in English (as is most of the WWW). An alternative for French teachers is to use the Yahoo! site in France (URL #3) or Canada (#4) and click on *"Sujets de société," "Gens,"* and *"Pages personnelles."* This procedure gives 4000 sites in French. The Canada site is in English, but allows the user to click on "Canada only" after "Entertainment," reducing the percentage of pages in English. There is a *Yahoo!* site in Germany (click on *"Gesellschaft und Soziales," "Menschen,"* and *"Private Homepages")*, but none currently in a Spanish-speaking country.

Several French-language directories locate personal home pages. All the following directories are available at the jump site at URL #5. Three sites, *La Toile du Québec, Carrefour,* and *Bottin Internet du Québec,* have a section called *"pages personnelles,"* which links to alphabetical listings of names. Two other directories, *Lokace* and *Nomade*, group home pages by country. *Francité* offers an organization by subject matter that will help students find a person with similar interests to theirs.

Another approach is to use a search engine, which looks for specific words in Web pages; *AltaVista* (URL #6) is the most powerful, searching tens of millions of documents. Two 1997 improvements make it very useful for foreign language teachers. The user can type in most accent marks using ASCII code (e.g. Alt 130 for *é*) and can limit sites returned to a specific language. These features are particularly useful for French teachers, since many words are spelled the same or differ only in accent marks in French and English. *AltaVista* has "mirror" sites in four francophone European countries (France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Luxembourg) as well as the countries where Spanish and German are spoken (call up URL #7 to choose). Using European sites will not increase the number of target-language home pages, but it does give all terminology in the language the user selects.[5]

With search engines, the key is finding the right word or words to search. It seems advisable to start with *"page personnelle"* for this topic. As it turns out, AltaVista ignores "page" (6.7 million "hits"), and returns the best 200 of 9,600 sites with the word *"personnelle,"* most of them being personal home pages in French.[6] A quick read of the first few words of each page that the search engine returns shows not only the language of the site, but that most writers are graduate students in the sciences.

In order to find the home page of younger francophones, one can search words most likely to show up in those pages: *"Salut," "Bonjour," "Je m'appelle,"* and *"J'habite"* all produce results. The words *"étudiant"* and *"élève"* are possible, but a student at a *grande école* (a specialized university in France) is also an *élève*. Further searches are "*école*" and "*lycée*," terms that may be embedded in a home page, or they may send users to a school that has links to its students' home pages. Reasons for seeking home pages via a school are that it evens out the percentage of female students; it can introduce an element of multiculturalism; it is the surest way to find children; and the cultural information provided is extensive.[7] Students looking for an exact match can type in their age in the target language ("*J'ai 18 ans*," for example). Using quotation marks around the expression will return only sites using those words. Occasionally, one comes across a launch site for home pages, such as *Latino Web* (URL #10), but these are rare. For advanced search techniques and a review of all directories and search engines, see Lidsky and Kwon (1997) and Tweney (1996).

A different approach involves having students search a subject of interest to them and then examine the sites to see which ones are personal. The URLs (addresses) often have a tilde after a slash line, but not always. As an example of this technique, a search of "*voile*" (*sailing*) gave five personal pages out of the first ten sites listed. Perhaps the most effective search is through *Les Pages Web* (URL #11), which allows a limit of a search to "*Pages personnelles*" in the "*contenant*" box with a search engine. If a student types in a subject matter of interest, the search returns home pages mentioning that subject. For example, "*gymnastique*" returned 498 personal Web pages. These techniques will help students find pages they will want to read. Since many pages have links to the writer's friends who have home pages, students may find a small community that shares their interests.

Problems

It is important to recognize the problems that can occur with this new technology, the first of which is the appropriateness of content. Cultural differences between the United States and francophone nations lead to potential problems, especially with language and hyperlinks to other sites. Since much of the publicity in the popular media surrounding the WWW is negative (Vaughan-Nichols 1997), teachers at the K-12 level may encounter objections from parents before beginning. Several procedures can be used to keep students from accessing inappropriate sites, by accident or otherwise.

One of the better known, the *Magellan* directory, which rates sites for content, does not work for this topic because it does not rate personal home pages in foreign languages. For the lower grade levels, a number of software "filters," or site blockers. exist (for reviews, see Munro 1997 and Venditto 1996). They are only marginally successful and would have to be updated for a foreign language. However, having one in place might satisfy inquisitive parents. A helpful feature of the program *Cyber Patrol* is that it prevents the user from sending any personal information such as a home phone number (Munro 1997:238). A third possibility is to download entire sites onto a local disk drive and read them from there (Lafford and Lafford 1997:237; for a review of software that downloads, see Mendelsohn 1997; Stevenson and Venditto 1997). This technique has two additional advantages: eliminating the problem of slow loading over telephone wires and preserving sites that disappear. Teachers who plan on downloading should install a high-density, back-up drive, one that holds much more information than a regular diskette, especially if the Web sites have graphics (for a review, see Stone 1997).

A fourth possibility is probably the best: the teacher writes his or her own Web site with hyperlinks to home pages that have been verified. The computer language used on Web sites, HTML, is simply ASCII (unformatted) text to which tags have been added. For that reason, any word processor can be used (Higgins 1996b). Teachers can also use *Netscape Navigator Gold* or *Communicator* to create a site, and the current versions of popular word processing programs now save documents in HTML. The Web page can be placed on the school's server or disk drives; barring that, the teacher can find a free Web space offer or run the site from a local disk drive (Walz 1997). Of course, these efforts to control content will deprive students of the full features of the WWW and discourage the development of Web search skills.

The second problem alluded to above, the slowness of downloading, is one of the frequent complaints of students using the Web for school assignments (Lafford and Lafford 1997:236-37).[8] Whenever possible, teachers should send students to computers that are wired directly to a router rather than one with a modem and a telephone line (Williams 1995: Chapter 5). Directly-wired computers are most likely to be found in libraries and computer labs; home installation is prohibitively expensive. Downloading sites onto a local disk drive also solves the problem. WWW technology is changing fast, and the future cable modem will alleviate this slowness.[9] For other ideas on speeding up a Web connection, see *Consumer Reports* (1997).

The third problem will never change; the Web is ephemeral. A Web page that is wonderful one day is gone the next. The Web changes daily, which is its best and worst feature. Students using a site extensively for an assignment should download or print it. If teachers write a site with hyperlinks and assignments, then they must check and update the links regularly.

Pedagogical Applications

The following sections present sample learning activities for students of French, based on personal home pages currently found on the Web. Each of these sites has a link from the home page created specifically for this article; see the Appendix for the URL. Understanding these suggestions will be made easier by consulting the sites described. The following suggestions illustrate ways in which home pages can be used with students of various age levels, interests, and proficiencies.

Elementary School Activities

The site for Tiffany Nguyen (URL #12) is one that is suitable for the youngest French students, since Tiffany is five years old. The brief paragraph about her contains cultural references that need to be explained: *l'école maternelle, chez les moyens, plus de jours d'école que de mercredi.* The site has a visual interest, with pictures of the girl, her dog, and numerous drawings she has done. With software downloadable from the same site, one can hear her sing songs. She also has e-mail and a register with numerous messages from readers around the world.

The site can serve as an introduction to the WWW for French FLES students in kindergarten and the first grade. They will learn vocabulary through the labels on her drawings, and the teacher can explain other words in the messages that pertain to children (*super, cool, Ciao!*). They will see that not all French people look alike, but that children everywhere share common interests. Students may want help in composing a message for the register.

Le Journal des Juniors (URL #13) is a Web project of the *Ecole Publique* of Baillargues, a town near Montpellier. The site has many parts describing school projects and sharing the writing of the students, but the link to "*Les Juniors*" is the page that most resembles home pages. Clicking on *"Qui sommes-nous?"* produces a photograph of the class of 27 10- and 11-year-olds, an introductory text written in the style of that age group, and even a background in the form of French composition paper. In addition to trying to decipher the message, American FLES students can study the photograph for the clothes the children are wearing (count white T-shirts, for example) or look at the plants in the background to deduce the climate of *l'Hérault.*[10] The children come from a variety of ethnic groups, and all seem very happy.

A parallel page is that of the *président* or *présidente* of this class. It includes the name, age, likes/dislikes, and qualities/faults of the child, all written in very simple sentences. American students can use it as a model for writing a description of themselves or a friend. The page *"L'Actualité de la classe"* lists the year by weeks, with each week having a description of two or three things that happened in class. Students can list similar activities that happen in their class and things that would never happen. A different student can write a similar journal in French for each day. Other pages at this site include art, reports, recipes, stories, and poems written by the children; advanced FLES students can read and enjoy this authentic material.

For a different cultural perspective, the *Ecole Primaire de La Bigne* in the Calvados has a Web site at URL #14. The entire school has only thirteen students aged 5 to 10. The user can read a short autobiographical sketch of each one and see some individual photographs, as with the previous site. To practice writing skills. American students can describe the child they would most like to play with or choose the family that most closely resembles their own. They could also pick the one that most closely resembles a brother or sister or a good friend and explain why. Comprehension activities include figuring out who is related at the school and what meal you would serve them (since many state likes and dislikes).[11] The descriptions are more elaborate at the site for the *Ecole Publique de Valence-Charente* at URL #15.

The *Ecole Internationale Franco-Américaine* in Portland, Oregon has a Web site in French that describes class projects (URL #16). This page has a table with 18 cells leading to projects done by students from kindergarten through the fifth grade. Several sites can serve as inspiration for advanced FLES students, who can imitate the type of writing found there. Projects that will develop reading and writing skills include an interactive story in which the reader chooses one of two possibilities for the next step in the story (click on *CP Solange*), a series of poems called "*Ce qui est chouette,*" where all lines have the form "*C'est un(e) [animal] qui ....*" and the last word rhymes with "*ette*" (*CE1/anglais*), interviews followed by written descriptions of a classmate (*CE2/anglais*), and poetry written by the students (*CM2*). The school has immersion classes, allowing the French to be more advanced than that of typical FLES programs, but the teachers have left the mistakes of French in the texts, thus adding to the authenticity. As a general rule, Web sites in the target language can always serve as inspiration for writing assignments in foreign language classes.

Middle School Activities

The easiest way to find personal sites for the 11- to 15-year-old age group remains school sites, as with younger children. A good orientation to the *collège* is the site for Tiffany Nguyen's brother, Stanley. He has his class schedule in pictures on one page (URL #17). Although there are very few words, the page is a good description of a week in this type of French school. The cultural differences are striking (except for the name of the school, Martin Luther King): the time of each class indicated by the twenty-four-hour clock; no classes on Wednesday, but classes on Saturday until 12:10; the different times for most classes, including different starting and ending times on many days; the alternating of history and geography; and the bottle of wine for lunch for example. The teacher can provide students with a list of questions pertaining to what days or at what time certain classes begin, or how many times a week Stanley has certain classes.

The Web site *Premiers Pas sur Internet* is located at URL #18. It contains pages on many topics of interest to French-speaking children and adolescents. By clicking on "*Correspondants*" in the left frame, the user calls up short descriptions of a large number of young students, which is as close as one can come to home pages for this age (9 to 14 years old for the most part). Students can go through the list either by reading each description or by using the search-text feature (Control-F) to look for a specific age or a similar interest. For example, "Spice Girls" yielded

16 names. Each has a direct link to an e-mail address so that students can find penpals. The bottom of the list has 105 parallel sites (as of this writing) with more lists of students, giving thousands in all. It is also possible for each student who has an e-mail address to add his or her autobiography to the list. One of the most useful features of the site is that many francophone areas of the world are represented. Clicking on "*Ecoles*" in the left frame will produce a long list of French-speaking schools having Web sites and arranged in alphabetical order by locale, which leads to the possibility of pairing entire classes.

A somewhat similar site is that of *CyberPresse* (URL #19), an on-line magazine published in Quebec. This page is a long list of names of students aged 11 to 15 who work on the project. Each name is a link to a personal description; many include a photograph. All of the previously mentioned activities, such as comparison and contrasting, finding similar and dissimilar people, and matching similar students are possible. Given the rapid access to a number a pages that this site provides, a memory game is possible in which learners have to remember the characteristics, physical descriptions, and interests of as many students as possible, perhaps by completing a form within a time limit. Additional advantages of this site are the cultural differences of a Quebec site and having personal pages of girls outnumber boys for once.

High School Activities

A sample personal page where high school students can start is located at URL #20. The author is a 27-year-old fireman from Quebec. The site adds socioeconomic and geographic variety to these activities; it is relevant also because the author talks about his interests and his family. Since many high school foreign language students are beginners, teachers can continue to use reading comprehension tasks: finding similarities, shared interests, and major differences among oneself and one's friends, classmates, and family.

A frequent aspect of home pages of older students and professionals is the presence of a curriculum vitae on the site. An example is the site of Damien Dixsaut, a 20-year-old student from Paris (URL #21). Students can match his prose description of himself with items on the CV. They can use this CV as a model to create their own or a CV as they would like it to read in ten years. A more varied CV is found at URL #22; the author is slightly older. A fairly advanced writing assignment is to have students turn a CV into a prose biography, varying from a simple name, address, profession, and birthdate to a full life story. Students have access to numerous CVs of people looking for employment at URL #23, an employment search site located in Versailles. Advantages of this site are that a large number of CVs are arranged by type of job sought and that there is a search engine. Students can examine several requests for employment and then write their own.

For more personal content from Web writers, teachers may wish to evaluate a page from RESCOL, a Canadian educational organization, where students write about their lives and personal problems (URL #24). The site may be too intense for some classes because many of the problems are serious (drugs, child abuse, thoughts of suicide), but the opportunity to read about them and to read the reactions of other students who send in messages may motivate some students to read difficult texts and perhaps respond.

For writing activities on lighter topics, students can correspond with virtually every home page author.[12] In addition to all the pages mentioned here, URL #25 lists all the students in a class in a *lycée* in Paris, with a brief description of students' interests and an e-mail address. The photograph of the class shows a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures. By asking learners to state which *lycée* student has the greatest number of similar interests, teachers will engage them in fairly extensive reading. URL #26 is a Quebec site that invites francophones from all over the world to solicit e-mail messages. Most users list their age, interests, and what city they live in. Asking a specific question about an interest is a good way to start a correspondence.

A last activity for advanced high school students would be to use search engines, as described in the first part of this article, to find personal home pages on their own. By using criteria of their choosing (an interest or home town, for example), they can locate native speakers who are similar to them and who would motivate them to read and write in the target language. Some students may be interested enough to write and publish their own home page (Higgins 1996b) and develop new friendships from around the world.

College Activities

Most of the reading comprehension and decision-making activities mentioned for lower levels will work at the college level as long as they are age-appropriate and involve older Web page writers. The opportunities increase when the college students are at a more advanced level of proficiency. Teachers should encourage the development of Web skills, such as finding sites of people who have a particular interest or talent. The language used to compose Web sites is an entire subject in itself, with possibilities including finding and categorizing errors of French, analyzing the style of the language, such as showing what forms and vocabulary are familiar as opposed to formal, and looking for culture embedded in language. The latter suggestion is particularly useful for future French teachers, who can learn to identify culturally based language and to teach future students to ask the right questions, such as the previously mentioned statement "*plus de jours d'école que de mercredi*." The explanation of Wednesday (the French day off from school) is in the question itself.

Learners at the college level can combine two of these ideas: locate cultural references and learn the skills with the Web that will allow them to find the answer. For example, many sites of young French people mention an interest in "*VTT*," an acronym not explained in most textbooks. By searching the word in *AltaVista*, French language only, the college student can read a number of sites to find out what

"VTT" is. (Most sites assume the reader knows, so that deduction becomes necessary: it is mountain biking.) If need be, learners can try e-mailing the person who made the reference to seek an explanation.

Several scholars recommend the use of the WWW as a research or information gathering tool for foreign languages.[13] With respect to personal home pages, information gathering can include following links in order to write a complete portrait of the author, linking friends and their interests as a small community, and writing or presenting an oral report on cultural differences between American and target-language home pages. The higher the level of proficiency of the students using the Web, the greater the possibilities are for learning from it.

Conclusion

Personal home pages written by native speakers of the languages we teach are authentic documents that have numerous applications to the teaching and learning of languages and cultures. They show real people using natural language with visual support. Students can read and react to the texts and perhaps correspond with their authors. These pages are a useful pedagogical device for foreign language students of all ages.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Barbara Cooper, Timothy Raser, and Christine Fau for providing helpful information used in this article. I alone remain responsible for errors.
2. See, for example, Omaggio 1986:2-10; Valdman 1987; Valette 1989, Valette 1991; Reader's Forum, *Modern Language Journal*, vol. 76.
3. See Abrate 1996, 1997; Blyth 1998; Fidelman 1996; Finneman 1996; Green 1997; Higgins 1996a, 1996b; Lafford and Lafford 1997; Moehle-Vieregge et al. 1997; Walz 1997, 1998; Warschauer 1995.
4. Weber (1996) points out that Web users are predominantly male. Searches made for the writing of this article suggest that the imbalance of gender is even more true for personal home pages. This will have to change for the personal home page to reach its full potential as a teaching tool. The use of school sites, as recommended in this article, evens the percentages.
5. All searchers should be aware that Web page writers in many languages use the English term "home page." Using this as a key word and limiting the search to the target language returns thousands of sites.
6. German teachers can search "*persönliche*" and "*persoenliche*." Spanish teachers must use "*página personal*" because "*personal*" alone would return primarily English-language sites, unless the search engine allows limiting the search to a single language.
7. URLs #8 and #9 are launch sites for French-language schools.

8. The cartoon *Doonesbury* made fun of its own site for this very drawback; by the end of the Sunday panel, the title had not yet completely downloaded (Trudeau 1997). Bush (1996) quotes one teacher as referring to the "World Wide Wait."
9. The new 56K modems may or may not help (Bloomer 1997).
10. For interesting ways to use the analysis of photographs in foreign language teaching, see Scanlan (1980).
11. Likes and dislikes on Web pages lead to many different activities depending on the proficiency level of the learners. For example, the teacher can prepare a long menu and ask students to strike out any items that are disliked by the people on the page. A matching activity would have a list of names in random order and a list of preferences, with students drawing lines between the matches. A simple information gathering activity would involve making statements similar to ones on the page, but with words left out that students fill in from the page. Each student could play the role of one of the students on the page and have others scroll up or down to find the name.
12. Using e-mail to correspond with unknown people has received considerable bad press. It should be pointed out that all of these cases involve the use of "chat rooms," where everyone is anonymous. It is unlikely that writing to someone who is completely identified with a Web page and who has a contract with the Internet service provider could lead to problems. Still, students should not give out a last name, home address, or home phone number.
13. See Abrate 1997:159-62; Carrier 1997:288-89; Green 1997; Higgins 1996a; Lafford and Lafford 1997:223-30; Lee 1997; and Warschauer 1995.

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Appendix

The following list gives the URLs (Web addresses) mentioned in this article. One can access them directly from the following launch site created for this article:

http://www.uga.edu/~romlan/rapports/homepage.htm

All of these sites were active at the time this article went to press. As mentioned above, sites disappear with alarming regularity. The descriptions of ways to find Web pages and develop pedagogical applications can serve as a model for other pages even if these are no longer available.

1. Launch sites for French: http://www.uga.edu/~romlan/rapports/launch.htm
2. *Yahoo!*: http://www.yahoo.com
3. *Yahoo!* in France: http://www.yahoo.fr
4, *Yahoo!* in Canada: http://www.yahoo.ca
5. French search engines: http://www.cam.org/~payette/resource.htm#Enginsf
6. *AltaVista*: http://altavista.digital.com/
7. *AltaVista* in Europe: http://www.altavista.telia.com/
8. French schools: http://www.ac-toulouse.fr/piquecos/pages/ecoles_fr.html
9. French schools: http://www.cyber-espace.com/ecolfr/liste_ec.shtml
10. *Latino Web*: http://www.catalog.com/favision/personal.htm
11. *Les Pages Web*: http://www.pagesweb.com/
12. Tiffany Nguyen: http://www.cybertheque.fr/perso/anita/tiffany.html
13. *Ecole Publique de Baillargues*: http://www.ac-montpellier.fr/cybersites/herault/ecoles/sup_baillarg/classe.html
14. *Ecole Primaire de La Bigne:* http://www.cpod.com/monoweb/ecole-labigne/enfants.html
15. *Ecole de Valence-Charente*: http://www.freinet.org/creactif/valence/rkk97/presenfr.htm
16. *Ecole Internationale Franco-Américaine*: http://www.fas.pps.k12.or.us/fas2/classfr.html

17. Stanley Nguyen's class schedule: http://www.cybertheque.fr/perso/anita/stanley/stanplan.gif
18. *Premiers Pas sur Internet*: http://www.imaginet.fr/momes/
19. *CyberPresse*: http://cyberscol.cscs.qc.ca/CyberPresse/Equipes/JdQ/
20. Bertrand Magniette (fireman): http://members.aol.com:80/freefallf/index.htm
21. Damien Dixsaut: http://www.cristal.asso.fr/~damien/
22. Pascal Pluchon: http://www.inforoute.cgs.fr/pluchon/CV.HTML
23. *Réseau Européen pour l'Emploi*: http://www.reseau.org/emploi/
24. *Rescol Canadien*: http://www.rescol.ca/adm/orientation/accroche-toi/temoignages/personne.html
25. *Lycée Le Rebours* (penpals): http://web.fdn.fr/~rebours/2de2_p.htm
26. Penpals: http://w3.franco.ca/correspondance/

6

Writing Assistant Software: An Effective Tool in Improving Writing?

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Florida State University

Introduction

Over the course of the last couple of decades, a panoply of second language acquisition theories, methods, and techniques has vied for the attention of the foreign language teacher. From the Natural Approach to input processing, from Total Physical Response to whole language instruction, from collaborative learning to language across the curriculum, each new idea offers another choice in the way instructors teach and students learn the four language skills. Added to this array of options is the swiftly expanding dimension of technological applications to language learning. Proponents of certain theories and techniques can now see their conceptions made accessible by means of delivery systems unavailable just a few short years ago: laser disc, the Internet, voice recognition software, electronic mail, and many more.

The latest teaching methods as well as the most up-to-date technological applications purport to enhance the teaching and learning of all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, most instructors and students would agree that one of the skills—writing—has been almost invisible in the contemporary foreign language curriculum. This experience of the devaluation of writing is echoed by Terry's observation, "Of the four skills . . . writing is perhaps the most poorly understood and the skill that is given, in fact, the most cursory attention" (1989:43); Scott's remark, "Writing is given relatively little attention in the FL curriculum" (1996:x); and similar comments by other researchers and practitioners. Influenced heavily by the proficiency movement and communicative instructional techniques, the pastiche of methods employed today has focused predominantly on listening and speaking, with reading following close behind, and writing seemingly forgotten.

This present state in the hierarchy of interest regarding the various skills appears ready to make a major shift. Several very recent comprehensive studies of writing have been published (White, E. M., *Teaching and Assessing Writing,* [2nd ed.], 1994; White, R. V., ed., *New Ways in Teaching Writing,* 1995; Scott, V. M. *Rethinking Foreign Language Writing,* 1996) as well as numerous shorter reports of research on this skill. A new professional publication, the *Journal of Second Language Writing,* serves as an outlet for researchers in this area. This shift in interest to the skill of writing may be due to the simple exigency of the past twenty years' benign neglect. But it may also be due to the reality of the contemporary use of technology, not only in second language learning but in almost every facet of today's society.

Bush and Terry's *Technology-Enhanced Language Learning* (1997) and Muyskens' *New Ways of Learning and Teaching: Focus on Technology and Foreign Language Education* (1997) cite many examples of the crossover of various forms of technology to the foreign language teaching and learning environment. The most common of these applications of technology are in the domain of computer assisted instruction (CAI). Adolph and LeBlanc posit the notion that our computer-saturated homes and offices have created the need for much greater proficiency in reading and writing: "As teachers, it is our responsibility in the era of e-mail and fax to see that our students can communicate in writing" (in Muyskens 1997: 27). Thus these two strands of interest—the desire to give renewed attention to the neglected skill of writing and the need for greater proficiency with this skill in order to communicate in a computer-rich environment—seem to be merging in a timely fashion.

Cognizant of the necessity to improve instruction in second language writing, researchers at Florida State University raised the question of whether any commercially available computer software might serve as an effective tool to aid learners in becoming more proficient writers. The researchers then conducted two studies of the writing of second-semester college French students who were trained in the use of the writing assistant software, *Système-D* (Noblitt et al. 1992). A description of these studies and discussion of their results will follow a brief overview of research relevant to the issue of improving writing skills in a second language.

Relevant Research

In 1987 Horning was one of the first researchers to apply to writing various theories which are associated with second language listening and speaking. E.M. White's 1994 *Teaching and Assessing Writing* focuses on evaluation of writing and using that evaluation as a teaching tool. The editor of *New Ways in Teaching Writing* (1995), R.V. White, offers a much less theoretical work and one which can serve as a handbook of techniques and procedures for writing in a second language.

The most recent comprehensive study of second language writing is Scott's *Rethinking Foreign Language Writing* (1996), a wide-ranging discussion which reviews a breadth of relevant research and offers practical approaches to teaching and learning how to write. Among the hypotheses which Scott posits is the notion that computer-aided writing enhances the foreign language writing experience. In her chapter on writing and computers, Scott summarizes work done in L1 and ESL research which is applicable to second language writing: word processing programs support bottom-up mechanics of writing; writers process differently when composing at a computer; and many variables (student familiarity, teacher attitude, setting, type of software) determine the effectiveness of computer use.

Central to Scott's discussion of computers and L2 writing is her review of several software programs for teaching FL writing: *Système-D* for French (Noblitt et al. 1992), *Atajo* for Spanish (Dominguez et al. 1993), and *Quelle* for German (Noblitt et al. 1997). These programs include a number of databases, namely a bilingual dictionary, and grammar, vocabulary, and phrase indexes. Advantages of this writing assistant software include taking into account students' computer literacy, assisting students to engage in both bottom-up and top-down processing, and encouraging students to write more than they would in a paper and pencil mode. In addition, Scott identifies several research questions which must be raised by users of these software programs, including student attitudes and feelings about computer L2 writing and a comparison of writing produced by students who use the software and those who do not.

While Scott and others have reviewed and analyzed theoretical applications to teaching and learning second language writing, several researchers have conducted studies on an array of specific topics concerned with writing with the goal of creating a much more solid research foundation for this skill. At present, researchers' interests seem to be clustered around at least four topics: linguistic issues, grammar instruction, evaluation of writing, and computer use. Dvorak's 1987 study on differences between oral and written language is one example of the first topic of interest (linguistic issues). Schultz's 1991 description of his writing program at Berkeley is one of many reports focusing on the role of grammar instruction.

Evaluation of L2 writing is also of interest to some researchers. An early study by Lalande (1984) compared correction of student writing by instructors to error correction by the students themselves. Since that time, Lalande's Error Correction Code (ECCO) and Error Awareness Sheet (EASE) have entered into the realm of common practice for many second language teachers (see Shrum and Glisan's *Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction*, pp. 321-322).

Finally a number of researchers have begun to look at various relationships between technology and the skill of writing. In a pilot study conducted in the late 1980s, Noblitt and Bland (1991) designed a tracking system to be used with the *Système-D* software such that records of student inquiries made into various reference databases were made while students were composing. This information "... when compared to the actual student composition, permitted [the researchers] to study real-time processing strategies. . ." (122). A follow-up study by Scott and New (1994) describes the development of an evaluation instrument which uses information gained from the computer tracking system and suggests how to use this instrument to teach writing in French.

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In sum, recent research supports several areas of inquiry in regard to second language writing: evaluative measures applied to assess writing, the role played by grammatical accuracy in determining good writing, perceptions of L2 students about the use of computer assisted instruction in developing their writing skills, and the use of word processing programs as an aid in improving the quality of writing.

Researchers at Florida State University focused on the last issue—the use of writing assistant software programs—to design two studies of L2 writing. Specifically, the first study investigated certain features of the *Systeme-D* software and their relationship to improving student writing while the second study looked at use versus non-use of *Systeme-D* as an aid in writing. In addition, a qualitative evaluation of *Systeme-D* was completed by the student users of the software. A brief overview of the first, or pilot, study follows. Next, a more detailed description of the second study is presented. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of these two studies.

Description of Study I

Research to date (Scott and New 1994) shows that users of the *Systeme-D* writing assistant software rely predominantly on the bilingual dictionary when writing and revising. In order to determine whether features other than *Systeme-D*'s dictionary might be accessed by students wishing to improve the quality of their writing, researchers at Florida State University began with an initial study that examined student use of the software's grammar reference feature. The researchers identified syntactic complexity at the clausal level—especially coordinate, subordinate, and reduced clauses—as features of better quality writing. Present participles and relative pronouns were selected as specific markers of this complexity and are featured in *Systeme-D*'s reference grammar but not in the texts used in Florida State's introductory French course.

With two groups of second-semester college French students as subjects, Study I compared the syntactic complexity of writing produced by students who received explicit instruction in the use of specific features of *Systeme-D*'s reference grammar (the experimental group) and those who received general instruction on the use of the software (the control group). Both groups rated themselves as "average" writers in French and as "strong" writers in English. They also evaluated their feelings towards computers as "somewhat comfortable" and both groups were taught by the same instructor-researcher who was a non-native French speaker with native-like fluency and extensive teaching experience. Evaluative measures included rating of pre- and post-treatment writing samples for experimental and control students. Researchers hoped that the outcomes would support the hypothesis that explicit instruction in the grammar reference feature of *Systeme-D* would result in more effective writing. However, upon analysis of the pre- and post-test samples, the researchers determined that any difference in scores was probably due to sampling error and not the treatment.

The results of the first study led the researchers to reexamine their research design and to rework their hypothesis. The researchers found that several factors may have contributed to the results: the low inter-rater reliability, too much emphasis on relative pronouns and present participles as the gauge of good writing, and reports that some students did not access the software at all. In light of these observations, the researchers designed and implemented a second study in order to examine a more basic issue: How does the writing of *Systéme-D* users compare with that produced by non-users of the software?

Description of Study II

With two groups of second-semester college French students as subjects, the second study compared the evaluation of writing produced by students who had access to and received instruction in the use of the writing assistant software *Systéme-D* and those who did not. Evaluative measures included rating of pre-and post-treatment writing samples for experimental and control students. Researchers hoped that the outcomes would support the hypothesis that use of writing assistant software such as *Systéme-D* would result in more effective L2 writing by students.

Method

Subjects. The second study involved 50 students from two second-semester introductory French classes at Florida State University during Fall, 1997. This course is available to students who have completed the equivalent of one semester of college level French. There were 25 students in the experimental class and 25 in the control class. All but three students from each group had studied at least two years of French in high school but no more than three years. All but five students from each group had taken the first semester introductory French class at the university. The control group rated themselves as "better than average" writers in French and as "better than average" writers in English. They also described themselves as having "no feelings" towards computers. The experimental group rated themselves as "average" writers in French and as "better than average" writers in English. They also described themselves as feeling "somewhat comfortable" with computers, just as the participants reported in the first study. Both the experimental and the control groups were taught by the same instructor who was a non-native French speaker with native-like fluency and extensive teaching experience.

General Procedure. The students in each group took a one-hour pre-test without the use of instructional aids. For the pre-test, students wrote on the following subject in French:

> You are going to spend a year in France with a French family. The agency that is placing you would like for you to write a biographical passage to assist in your placement. Describe your family background, personal qualities, education, work experience, hobbies, and anything else they should know about you.

Next, students in the experimental group were given instruction on the use of *Systéme-D* during a one-hour class held in the department's computer lab. The instructor then assigned three different compositions to be completed over the course of the semester. The students in the experimental group were specifically instructed to use *Systéme-D* for each of the compositions while students in the control group completed all assigned writing tasks without the use of the software. At the end of the semester, students took a post-test, replicating the topic and conditions of the pre-test. Just as was the case in Study I, the instructor did not provide a grade or evaluation to the students. All writing completed during the course was collected in a portfolio for which students received credit.

Measuring Procedures. Two evaluators were trained in the use of an analytical writing assessment instrument that is widely used for evaluation of writing tasks in ESL and was adopted for this study. This instrument[1] takes into account content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics (see Figure 1.).

Figure 1. ESL Composition Profile

Content	
30-27	Excellent to Very Good: knowledgeable, substantive, thorough development of thesis, relevant to assigned topic
26-22	Good to Average: some knowledge of subject, adequate range, limited development of thesis, mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail
21-17	Fair to Poor: limited knowledge of subject, little substance, inadequate development of topic
16-13	Very Poor: does not show knowledge of subject, nonsubstantive, not pertinent, OR not enough to evaluate
Organization	
20-18	Excellent to Very Good: fluent expression, ideas clearly stated/supported, succinct, well-organized, logical sequencing, cohesive
17-14	Good to Average: somewhat choppy, loosely organized but main ideas stand out, limited support, logical but incomplete sequencing
13-10	Fair to Poor: non-fluent, ideas confused or disconnected, lacks logical sequencing and developing
9-7	Very Poor: does not communicate, no organization, OR not enough to evaluate
Vocabulary	
20-18	Excellent to Very Good: sophisticated range, effective word/idiom choice and usage, word form mastery, appropriate register
17-14	Good to Average: adequate range, occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured
13-10	Fair to Poor: limited range, frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage, meaning confused or obscured
9-7	Very Poor: essentially translation, little knowledge of [French] vocabulary, idioms, word form, OR not enough to evaluate

Language Use

25-22 Excellent to Very Good: effective complex constructions, few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions

21-18 Good to Average: effective but simple constructions, minor problems in complex constructions, several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions but meaning seldom obscured

17-11 Fair to Poor: major problems in simple/complex constructions, frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions, meaning confused or obscured

10-5 Very Poor: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules, dominated by errors, does not communicate, OR not enough to evaluate

Mechanics

5 Excellent to Very Good: demonstrates mastery of conventions, few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing

4 Good to Average: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing but meaning not obscured

3 Fair to Poor: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, poor handwriting, meaning confused or obscured

2 Very Poor: no mastery of conventions, dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, handwriting illegible, OR not enough to evaluate

Maximum score=100

Note: The author gratefully acknowledges the permission of Heinle & Heinle Publishers to reproduce the ESL Composition Profile, found in Jacob et al. (1981).

The evaluators, doctoral students with native-like fluency in French, were experienced both as instructors and as readers of writing samples for placement tests. During training, the researchers explained to the evaluators that their task would be to apply criteria of the assessment instrument. The researchers explained that for content, scores ranged from 30 (excellent to very good) to 13 (very poor). For organization and for vocabulary evaluators could score from 20 (excellent to very good) to 7 (very poor). The range for language use went from 25 (excellent to very good) to 5 (very poor). Finally, the mechanics' range was 5 (excellent to very good) to 2 (very poor). The maximum score that evaluators could assign was 100.

The researchers next discussed these criteria with the evaluators, who then assessed a mock writing sample. The evaluators were encouraged to explain the reasoning behind their decisions. After this initial conversation, both evaluators continued to discuss and assess samples of writing until they reached consensus on their ratings. The trained evaluators then scored all the writing samples. The writing samples bore no identification as to whether they were pre- or post-tests or whether they came from the experimental or control groups.

Results

The researchers first determined the inter-rater reliability to be 85 %, that is, the two evaluators were assigning similar scores 85 % of the time. This was much stronger than the 45 % reliability achieved in Study I. The researchers then applied the appropriate statistical tests that analyzed gain scores between the experimental and control groups' pre- and post-tests scores and noted that the experimental group had an improvement in scores. This improvement in scores from pre-test to post-test was statistically significant. Upon analysis of the pre- and post-test samples, the researchers determined that the treatment may have possibly influenced the improvement of scores. [2]

Système-D Writing Assistant Software: Student Use Survey

As a part of the research, students completed a questionnaire anonymously that dealt with their personal use and evaluation of the writing assistant software, *Système-D*. Two types of questions were used in the survey. Some were constructed to solicit "yes/no" answers while others asked for more precise information (see Appendix 1). In order to answer the questions, the students either circled the applicable "yes/no" answer or indicated the appropriate response from a set of given choices. (There were no open-ended questions, in order to ensure that the answers could be quantified.) The surveys were administered after students had completed all of the composition assignments for the course, including the studies' pre- and post-tests.

The first question separated the students into two groups: those who had used the software and those who had not. The rest of the survey then focused on those who had used the software. Of the 165 students who responded to the survey 48.5% answered "yes" to having used the software program. Of those students who had responded "yes," 64% said that they had received adequate training in the use of *Système-D* each time they had to complete a writing assignment.

In order to determine the typical amount of time spent using the software for an assignment, students selected the appropriate responses from a time scale divided into fifteen-minute increments. The most frequent choice, selected by 29%, was an average of "60 minutes" per assignment. 28% of the students chose "30 minutes," followed by 18% of the students who chose "45 minutes." 14% selected "15 minutes" and "75 minutes" was selected by 6% of the students. The remaining 5% of the students reported that on average they used the software for "more than 75 minutes" per assignment.

The next group of questions asked students to evaluate aspects of the *Système-D* writing assistant software program. Students were asked to rank the four features offered by the software using a descending value scale where the number "4" corresponded to the highest value and the number "1" to the lowest. The results of this question showed that the dictionary tool was the most popular function, with 57% of the students ranking it as such. The vocabulary index was second most popular at 29% followed by the grammar function (13%) and lastly the phrase index at 6%. The predominance of the dictionary function and the vocabulary index supports previous research conducted by Scott and New (1994).

Another item on the survey asked students to evaluate the benefits of *Systeme-D* regarding their own writing abilities. When asked if using *Systeme-D* helped them to "write more effectively in French," 52% responded "yes." Students were also asked if they would use *Systeme-D* as an aid on future writing assignments; 50.6 % said that they would while 49.4% indicated that they would not.

In sum, the researchers discovered a very mixed response on the part of student users of the *Systeme-D* software. Although two-thirds of the students said they had received adequate training in the use of the software, only 50 % actually used it. In addition, only half of the survey respondents said that *Systeme-D* helped them in their writing, while only 49.4 % reported that they would use it again. Moreover, just as earlier research (Scott and New, 1994) has shown, students overwhelmingly (86 %) preferred the dictionary and vocabulary features of the software and showed very little interest in the grammar and phrase indexes. This last finding is of particular interest, given the focus on the grammar index by the experimental group in Study I.

Discussion

Focusing on the use of word processing programs as an aid in improving the quality of writing in a second language, the present research looked at two issues: What is the relationship between use of the grammar reference feature of the *Systeme-D* software and quality of writing in French? (Study I). And, can the general use of this type of software have a positive effect on overall quality of L2 writing (Study II)? Researchers also examined users' evaluation of the benefits of the software by means of responses to a survey.

The two measures applied to pre- and post-test writing samples in Study I yielded weak results. The low inter-rater reliability (45 %) achieved by evaluators who scored writing samples using an analytical instrument made their assessments uninterpretable. The pre- and post-test measurement of grammatical features associated with good writing (use of present participles and relative pronouns) gave the researchers no confidence that any increase in use of these features was significant. Results of the software users' survey suggest that, although adequately trained, relatively small numbers of students (only 49 %) actually used the software and an even smaller group (13 %) found useful the very feature (grammar reference) on which the study focused. Certainly, no conclusion could be drawn about the effectiveness of this software as an aid to improving L2 writing based on the results of the first study.

Study II is, perhaps, more instructive. Using a detailed analytical writing assessment instrument, evaluators of pre- and post-treatment writing samples from users and non-users of the *Système-D* software achieved 85 % inter-rater reliability in their evaluations. Every student (except one) who used the software showed a gain in scores from pre- to post-treatment writing samples, with the mean gain of the experimental group at a statistically significant 5.1 %. Students who did not use the writing assistant software demonstrated a mean gain of only 2.1 %, with 41 % of the control group showing no improvement or a lower score on the post-test as compared to the pre-test.

In contrast to the unresolved results of Study I, the findings of Study II suggest a positive effect on improving L2 writing for users of the *Système-D* writing assistant software. Based on observing a gain in scores achieved on an analytical writing evaluation instrument, the researchers can propose that modest benefits might be achieved by potential users of this software. Whether these benefits would be sufficiently motivating to encourage students and others to use the software is another issue. The results of the software users' survey indicated that only 52 % of the study participants felt that *Système-D* had helped them in their writing and only 50 % predicted that they would use the software again.

There are, of course, several limitations to these studies. First, the weak results achieved in Study I are open for interpretation. Issues such as instruction provided during treatment, training of the evaluators, and accessibility of the software are among the variables which may have affected the research. Second, the modest gain shown by the experimental group in Study II, although statistically significant, was achieved by a small number of software users. Similar results demonstrated by a larger population would likely yield more confidence in the outcome. Third, the researchers were not able to isolate all variables which could have affected the results of both studies. Specifically, students had access to other resources beyond the *Système-D* software (course textbooks, fellow students, departmental instructors) which might have played a role in improving the quality of participants' writing during the time of the studies.

Further research might be carried out to address these various limitations and to substantiate the results achieved in the present studies. Such research would undoubtedly focus on various design elements of the present studies. Inter-rater reliability must be sufficiently high in order to have confidence in the results achieved (as in Study II, for example). Conditions should be controlled so that use of the software is not optional and that access to other resources is very limited. Much greater numbers of software users must be involved in future research to determine whether the small gains shown in Study II can be replicated or, perhaps, increased. A follow-up study which included these elements would certainly enhance the results of the present research.

Implications

Although writing in L2 has received relatively little attention during the last couple of decades, recent research has begun to shift teachers' and students' focus to this important language skill. The application of technology—especially computer assisted instruction—to foreign language learning is likely to be particularly beneficial to the skill of writing. Software programs, such as *Systéme-D*, may provide a means for L2 students to improve the quality of their writing using resources which are readily available and are not dependent on classroom instruction. Further research into the effectiveness of L2 writing assistant software and students' attitudes toward computer writing must be carried out, of course. Nevertheless, the preliminary work undertaken in the studies reported here suggests the potential for a widespread application of this valuable technological resource[3]

Notes

1. The writing assessment instrument used for the second study is the ESL Composition Profile created in 1981 by Jacobs, H. L., S. Zingraf, D. Wormuth, V. Harfield, and J. Hughey, *Testing ESL Composition: A Practical Approach.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House. The instrument is re-printed in Shrum and Glisan's *Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction* (323-324).
2. Readers interested in more information about the statistical analysis should contact the authors.
3. The authors would like to express their appreciation to colleagues and staff who assisted in this project: Jimmie Dickey, Jennifer Law, Steven Lovasz, and Scott Taylor. The authors are especially appreciative of the assistance provided by Ashley Shams in analyzing the data.

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Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics
Systéme-D Writing Assistant Student User Survey

Please answer the following questions concerning your use of the *Systéme-D* writing assistant software in French classes at FSU. The survey should be answered anonymously. Your responses will have no bearing on your grade in your French courses. Thank you.

1. Have you ever used *Systéme-D*? YES NO
   (If you answered "YES please answer questions 2-10)

2. Did you use *Systéme-D* in FRE 1121 in Spring, 1997? YES NO

3. Did you receive adequate training in how to use *Systéme-D*? YES NO

4. Rank the features of *Systéme-D* that were useful (4=most useful; l=least)
   Phrase index ________ Vocabulary ________
   Dictionary ________ Grammar ________

5. Did you use this software only on the day before assignments were due?
   YES NO

6. Did using *Systéme-D* help you write more effectively in French?
   YES NO

7. What was the usual amount of time (per assignment) you spent using *Systéme-D*?

8. What was the usual amount on time (per assignment) you spent using *Systéme-D*? (in minutes)
   15 30 45 60 75 more

9. Did you use Systéme-D each time you had a writing assignment?
   YES NO

10. Would you use Systéme-D as an aid in future writing in French?
    YES NO

11. Where would you prefer to use Systéme-D?
    In the computer lab YES NO
    At home YES NO
    Other locations YES NO

7

Connecting Content Areas Via Music: The Elementary Foreign Language Class

Daniel Mac Dougall
Spanish Unlimited

The learning of songs in the elementary foreign language classroom can be an essential preface to the entire language acquisition experience. This is because of the need, especially at the elementary level, to engage children affectively. When children enjoy an activity, such as singing, they are likely to be more at ease and spontaneous in their responses. By the same token, when the teacher provides positive feedback on a periodic basis to students, they are more willing to attempt new activities. For example, at the beginning of all classes taught by the author at the elementary level, a simple song, known by all students, was sung as a warm-up activity. Slight variations were made to provide a change of pace for the students. As a result of this activity students were in a positive frame of mind and ready to learn new material. The warm-up songs always dealt with previously learned subject matter, yet might have nothing to do directly with the new material to be covered that day. Very early in the school year full-class participation in this activity occurred because students found this singing to be motivating.

What followed in the class was often a recycling of material previously learned in the regular classroom. For example, in a unit about the rain forest, which the classroom teacher had discussed in English, one to two weeks later much of the same vocabulary and concepts were discussed in Spanish. By building upon the prior knowledge of students, an *esprit de corps* developed, similar to that experienced in the singing of warm-up songs.

It bears mentioning that song was perceived as a multi-dimensional element of artistic expression by the many civilizations throughout history, not as a neatly-packaged category of specialization, but as a part of a greater whole. The same is true today, in that music can serve as a vital conduit of artistic expression that connects various disciplines in the elementary curriculum. Its use as a vehicle for artistic expression as well as an excellent mnemonic device bodes well for its continued use as an integral part of the language acquisition process.

It is important to consider the fact that Gardner (1983) considers music to be one of the multiple intelligences with which students are gifted. Songs are a natural catalyst for obtaining interdisciplinary connections. These songs should be, as Pesola and Curtain (1994: 367) suggest, "...with a limited musical challenge...and with a vocabulary that is limited." In addition, "the rhythm (ought to be) straightforward and repetitive." Moreover, "it is helpful to have songs which have a refrain."

In addition, as Failoni (1993) states: "Music can be integrated into classroom activities, without assuming that a teacher or student can compose or perform music." (1993: 396) Not having to be overtly proficient in the medium might increase the usage of music by teachers. Furthermore, Failoni (1997: 397) makes the cogent observation that: "The struggling student may find communications skills easier when linked to music, since many people often remember rhyme, rhythm, or melody better than ordinary speech. Activities with songs possess the communicative aspect of language coupled with the entertainment aspect of music." Music provides a bridge to the regular elementary curriculum and helps students access higher order thinking skills.

The curriculum in most American elementary schools begins with a focus on one's self and one's immediate environment. This is usually followed by expanding the circle of interest outward to encompass one's neighborhood, city, county, state, and nation. While seeking a vehicle for including foreign languages at the elementary level almost a decade ago, the author surmised that songs, particularly those about animals, might be an excellent vehicle for enhancing interest and promoting understanding with students. Development of this technique has proven successful in engaging students in the study of foreign languages.

Witnessing a child's response to a cuddly kitten or puppy confirms a strong connection to animals. Consider also the number of popular movies which involve positive relationships between young children and animals. An element which enhances the visual experience of a movie is the soundtrack, so we retain both visual and auditory images of the films. By extension, songs about animals, even in a different language, have an immediate connecting element based upon prior knowledge and previous experience, since a type of comfort zone is provided.

Songs about animals can serve as a natural launching pad for exploration into other issues of self-discovery and expanded awareness, which can eventually encompass social and environmental concerns. As our students delve ever more deeply into the wellsprings of human thought via the study of foreign languages and literatures and begin to experience other points of view about life equally valid as their own, revelations can occur which allow a higher level of understanding than that provided by one language. Over time students can perceive the bigger picture of life and begin to see the forest as well as the trees.

Exposure to the learning of songs which tap themes of universal import, such as the environment, health, and the loss of habitat can cut across linguistic and geographic boundaries to provide an appreciation of life on our planet. Through this process, students can perceive that solutions to problems in one country can affect the quality of life in both contiguous and far-flung countries. A case in point is that for many years pesticides banned for usage in the United States have been routinely exported to developing nations whose laws do not prevent their entry. These same pesticides find their way onto the American kitchen table on top of fruits and vegetables. What was once a solution is no longer viable for maintaining a high quality of life for all.

Music can be used to foster an appreciation for the uniqueness of the flora and fauna of our planet and to gain insight into the delicate balance needed to assure future life on our planet. Hopefully, the sense of responsibility thus engendered will serve to solidify mutual respect for 'others,' be they human or animals, so students can eventually perceive that all of our lives are intimately connected, on a local, state, national, and global level. When we begin to understand that there is a definite benefit for studying another language and sense the value inherent in its usage beyond the classroom, the possibilities for life-long learning are greatly enhanced.

The following song was developed as one way to promote the insights mentioned above. It could be taught while studying a unit on the rain forest, as previously mentioned, which the classroom teacher has recently covered in English. Similar concepts and vocabulary are presented in both different context and language in order to further understanding.

The song is sung to the tune of 'Mary Had a Little Lamb'

En el bosque había un pajarito, un pajarito, un pajarito.
En el bosque había un pajarito llamado el tucán.
En el bosque había un pajarito, un pajarito, un pajarito.
En el bosque había un pajarito llamado el tucán.

English translation:

In the forest was a little bird, a little bird, a little bird.
In the forest was a little bird called the toucan.
In the forest was a little bird, a little bird, a little bird.
In the forest was a little bird called the toucan.

As a pre-listening activity the melody can be hummed in stages until all students are familiar with the basic sound. Then the pitch of the melody is either increased or decreased, based upon visual cues from the teacher, in order to offer variety. A picture of a toucan is shown by the teacher and the word 'tucán' (toucan) is said and repeated by the class. Then the habitat of the toucan is introduced via photo. The first few times the word 'bosque' (forest) is said, the photo of it is also pointed to in order to provide both a verbal and visual connection. After students become proficient in singing the first two lines, the next two are introduced. While students are learning this song they are also building upon their prior learning of the Spanish expression '*¿Dónde estás?*' (Where are you?), and seeing the concept used in a different context and with a different (third person) ending. Continued study in groups and as an entire class might require portions of time during several class periods to master.

What follows is a list of classroom activities which can be used to access the various multiple intelligences while teaching this song. These are based upon activities mentioned in Armstrong (1994:126).

Logical-mathematical: After seeing a picture of three toucans students are asked, after learning the expressions in Spanish, "How many toucans are there? It two go away, how many are there?"

Bodily-kinesthetic: While listening to a recording of the toucan song in pairs make two or three-dimensional manipulatives of the toucan in its usual habitat.

Musical: Create a song about another rain forest animal using a tune different from that used in the toucan song.

Linguistic: Find in a Spanish/English dictionary synonyms for words and expressions in the toucan song and create a new song with the different vocabulary.

Intrapersonal: Listen to the new songs created by your classmates and create a song about an extinct rain forest animal.

Interpersonal: Research in pairs the name of other animals characteristic of other Spanish-speaking countries and create a song or rap about them. Each student in the pair presents his/her song to his/her partner prior to doing so before the entire class.

Spatial: Draw a picture based upon a newly created song by one of your classmates.

A wide variety of sources are available for finding animals endemic to the rain forest and Latin-American countries. (Haas 1996; Internet Web Site **http://www.mindspring.com~zoonet/** ; Cuatli 1994; Emmons 1997).

As can be seen from the above examples, songs of interest to students about animals lend themselves to connecting with the content areas of the curriculum. Furthermore, songs are not only a vital link across the curriculum, but also within a culture. For example, the most popular birthday song in the Spanish-speaking world mentions King David. We cannot fully appreciate the Spanish language without realizing the strong influence which religion has played in its development. While knowledge tended to be reserved for the upper classes and the clergy in Western civilization since before the Middle Ages and even after the development of the printing press, the same was true to indigenous civilizations of the Americas. The Arabic *jarchas* or couplets, one of the first examples of Hispanic literature, rhymed, so even then mechanisms were in place to aid in remembering the collective history of people. The *Poema del Mío Cid,* which recounts the heroic exploits of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, to be fully appreciated, must be examined in light of the religious and historic context which gave it life. This is mentioned to underscore the idea that songs used in the foreign language class can serve as a motivating element to connect the classroom with the outside world. Songs are best taught in a way which conveys that there is a definite purpose for learning them and that they have applications beyond the classroom.

So, culture is a continued intertwining of the threads of language, history, religion, etc. Songs can be a catalyst in which key aspects of the curriculum can be naturally wedded and mutually reinforced, since the entire spectrum of human feelings can be expressed through them by students. Communication-based and content-enriched instruction, combined with well-designed and implemented catalysts, such as music, are key components in providing access to every facet of the foreign language curriculum.

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8

Using the National Standards to Improve Foreign Language Articulation: An Alternative to Placement Exams

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Introduction

The language teaching profession's inability to provide students with a successful and reliable articulation mechanism has plagued educators for decades (Walsh 1968; Halff 1975; Mosher 1989). Fortunately, renewed interest in foreign language articulation has motivated extensive discussion in the professional literature (Birckbichler 1995; Fountain 1996; Gahala 1996; Latoja 1996; LeBlanc and Lally 1997a, b; Metcalf 1995; Sandrock 1995). Certainly, out of the countless instruments and techniques now available, the perfect placement tool already exists—or does it? In the following sections, the present state of foreign language articulation is discussed, placement instruments are reviewed, and an alternative approach, stemming from the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning, is proposed.

The Problem

The foreign language student's move from elementary to secondary study, from secondary to postsecondary study, or even—once at the college or university—from basic language to literature courses, tends to be disruptive for all parties involved: students, teachers, and administrators. The mismatch between the student's past experience and the teacher's present expectations can take a variety of forms: the student can be under- or over-prepared for a particular course; or the student's preconceptions can differ from actual course content. Lange, Prior, and Sims point to several sources from which inefficient articulation arises:

- variation in the nature and quality of foreign language programs;
- variation in students' informal exposure to the foreign language;

- variation in the academic history of the student (i.e., the number of years intervening between high school study and college placement; and
- the apparent desire of many students to aim for low language placements to enhance GPA and/or to manage their university workload (1992: 284).

The most obvious and concrete aspect of articulation, which is a pressing concern for student and teacher alike, is placement. A common approach to placing incoming students has been the establishment of seat-time equivalencies (i.e., one year of high school foreign language study corresponds to one semester of postsecondary study) or the implementation of placement examinations, neither of which seems to have alleviated the placement problem. The next section of this discussion will examine these two options in more detail.

The Early Years

The dominant method of placing foreign language students in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s was the use of seat-time equivalencies (Lange, Prior, and Sims 1992; Spencer and Flaugher 1967). This technique assumed that prior instruction and current knowledge could be expressed in terms of "credits earned" and "course prerequisites."

The effectiveness of seat-time equivalencies has been questioned throughout the past decade (Hagiwara 1986; Klee and Rogers 1989; Lange, Prior, and Sims 1992). To replace seat-time formulas, many institutions adopted national standardized tests such as the MLA Cooperative Tests, the ACT Placement Programs, and the SAT Foreign Language Subject Tests (LeBlanc and Lally 1997). Standardized tests are designed for large populations and are slow to change. As such they are considered by many as incapable of keeping abreast of evolving language learning theories and techniques such as functional-notionalism and communicative competence (Lange, Prior, and Sims 1992; Mosher 1989). Similarly, small in-house exams, designed by various departmental committees, also tend to bear "little relationship to the kind of instruction [that] characterizes [many] secondary and postsecondary learning environments" (LeBlanc and Lally, 127).

The 1990s

The number of articulation initiatives has exploded in recent years (Corl et al. 1996). The major distinction between articulation efforts of the 1990s and those of the preceding decades is the fact that the more recent initiatives tend to be large, well-funded projects designed for a particular geographical area. State-wide projects in Wisconsin (Sandrock 1995), New York (Taylor 1995), South Carolina (Mosher 1989), Ohio (Birckbichler 1995), and Minnesota (Metcalf 1995) are representative of the current trend.

In Minnesota, for example, statewide foreign language testing begins in the high school student's senior year (Lange, Prior, and Sims 1992). In addition, the

University of Minnesota has developed proficiency-based college entrance and exit standards (Arendt, Lange, and Wakefield 1988). Efforts in South Carolina have resulted in a new placement instrument format which is to be used by all postsecondary foreign language departments in the state. In Ohio a series of early assessment tests are now in place, complete with a detailed training manual and a mechanism for administration and interpretation (Corl et al. 1996).

In spite of the depth and scope of recent state-wide articulation initiatives, one vestige of more traditional efforts seems to be inescapable: the need for some type of placement mechanism. One new approach, however, suggests that instead of spending time and money in search of the perfect placement test—be it a proficiency exam, an achievement exam, a computerized exam, or a state-wide exam—the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning can inspire us to look elsewhere.

How Can the Standards for Foreign Language Learning Improve Articulation?

The Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century identifies expected outcomes for language learners by defining content and performance standards—what a student should know and be able to do with the target language. In addition to producing an overarching framework to be used by teachers at different levels of instruction, the Standards can also provide a model of communication and cooperation among members of the foreign language teaching community. The Standards represent an "unprecedented consensus" among educators at all levels of instruction, as well as among members of business, government and community. In fact, the development of the Standards (i.e., the combined effort of a variety of educators, administrators, and community members) is nearly as important as the final product in that it represents a model of teamwork, collegiality, and collaboration that can be reapplied to ongoing articulation efforts.

The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* identifies "five Cs" of foreign education (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Community). However, communication must not only represent a student outcome, it must also become an essential and primary objective for language teachers seeking to improve the transition of students from secondary to postsecondary foreign language instruction.

Rhodes (1995) has suggested that educators begin to look at foreign language programs as long sequences, not just as elementary, middle school, high school or university programs. The implementation of a placement exam will not automatically prompt language teachers to look beyond their own classroom or level of instruction. Using the Standards as a guide, however, educators from all levels should learn to communicate and collaborate with one another in order to develop common principles and goals for the transition of language students throughout various stages of study.

To facilitate articulation, each of the five Standards for Foreign Language Learning must be extended beyond student activity to include teacher behaviors at all levels of instruction. The following modified standards—here reapplied to the teacher, as opposed to the student—do not address the obvious and concrete placement topic: the exam. Instead, the most easily ignored facet of articulation—namely, the increased cooperation among, and understanding of, different levels of instruction—is the focal point of the modified standards:

1. **The Communication Standard**. As well as encouraging communication in languages other than English, the communication standard can be extended to include communication among teachers about language, language students, and language curricula.
2. **The Culture Standard**. The desire to gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures can be reapplied to the realm of institutional cultures. Indeed, language teachers at elementary schools, secondary schools, and post-secondary institutions must become familiar with—or at least be aware of—what is occurring at other levels of instruction.
3. **The Connections Standard**. As well as facilitating the students' connection of foreign language course content with other disciplines, we must also, as teachers, connect to other areas of specialization within our own discipline, such as language, culture, literature, linguistics, and pedagogy.
4. **The Comparison Standard**. Not only must students develop insight into the nature of languages and culture, but language teachers must also engage in constant inquiry into the nature of language instruction by comparing/sharing material, methods, techniques, and goals.
5. **The Communities Standard**. In addition to encouraging students to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world, language teachers must participate in multi-instructional-level activities and organizations such as academic alliances and professional organizations.

Modifying and extending the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* to represent the desired teacher behaviors presented above would promote a climate more conducive to effective foreign language articulation by addressing communication—one of the most essential, yet often ignored, components of the articulation equation (Corl et al. 1996; Silber 1990).

A Working Example at the National Level

The 1995 Statement on Articulation from the Coalition of Foreign Language Organizations represents a model, from within the language teaching profession, that embodies the modified five Cs.

The *Statement on Articulation* contends that when "foreign language education is organized in extended sequences of instruction, teachers are able to plan and implement the most effective curricula to enable students to become competent users of a second language". Further, the coalition's statement asserts that articulation is achieved when language teachers:

- communicate and collaborate across levels and among disciplines;
- acknowledge common principles and common goals;
- focus on the learner and the content of the curriculum; and
- take into account the variety of student accomplishments at elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels.

In order to accomplish these activities, educators are encouraged to draw upon noteworthy sources such as:

- discussions of teaching practices,
- curriculum frameworks,
- national standards documents,
- performance assessment guidelines,
- results of state and regional guidelines, standards, and frameworks, and
- state and federal education reform policies.

Clearly, the *Statement on Articulation* personifies the modified standards in its suggestion that teachers improve *communication* and *connections* by collaborating "across levels and among disciplines." Moreover, the recommended "discussion of teaching practices" gives form to a *comparison* and sharing of material, methods, and goals. The recommendation that teachers familiarize themselves with the "variety of student accomplishments at elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels" advocates an improved understanding of the *cultures* that exist at different institutions and instructional levels. Finally, the undertaking of the members of the Coalition of Foreign Language Organizations to produce a single statement encompassing all languages and levels of instruction is a true example of a multi-level, multi-language *community* in action.

A Local Vision

In spite of the success of large national organizations in both spreading the word about the importance of articulation and in providing solid examples such as the Statement on Articulation, action must also take place at the local level. Indeed, only local collaborative efforts can take into account essential variables such as:

- the relationship between secondary and post-secondary professionals;
- local curricula;
- the number of students from area secondary schools that attend area colleges;
- the proximity of institutions; and
- the size and number of local language heritage communities.

The modified standards can guide teacher activity within local—or bottom-up—articulation efforts, as well as within the more common top-down flow of information. One possibility for a local articulation effort that embodies the modified five Cs is the development of secondary/post-secondary fact-finding teams. For example, small groups of secondary and post-secondary foreign language teachers from a given geographical area could meet not necessarily to discuss placement exams, but to:

- *communicate* to one another information about teaching conditions, methods, and curricula at specific local institutions, as opposed to general trends;
- learn about local institutional *cultures* by developing working relationships with professionals at different levels of instruction;
- build *connections* to other areas of specialization through discussion of the amount and type of language, culture, literature, and pedagogy that is stressed at other levels of instruction within the city or region;
- *compare* and share teaching materials and techniques through reciprocal classroom visits; and
- establish a local *community* dedicated to improved articulation that could eventually blossom from a small group of dedicated individuals to a city- or region-wide coalition.

Team members could rotate in order to provide a continuous mechanism of contact and communication across instructional levels, as well as maximize the development of professional relationships.

Conclusion

The combined efforts of members of academic alliances, national and regional associations, and grass-roots organizations to encourage effective articulation through Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities, is the hope of the future. Indeed, articulation efforts have already expanded from isolated language department projects to larger, more cooperative state-wide placement initiatives. Our next step in the search for improved articulation must be to follow the lead of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning by combining the efforts of all foreign language teachers at all levels of instruction for the good of all students. No single exam or equivalency formula will solve the articulation riddle alone—this has already been tried. Instead, the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* offer a model that can be expanded in order to improve the articulation of knowledge and objectives among teachers, as well as that of students throughout instructional levels.

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